

Preservice Teachers' Perceptions of Preparedness in Supporting Students Who Have

Experienced Trauma

By

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Abstract

Preservice teacher preparation regarding adolescent trauma and strategies to support student learning are rarely found in educational literature. Studies have shown the substantial and enduring consequences of childhood trauma on students' classroom conduct and academic success. Secondary preservice teachers confront numerous experiences with adolescents experiencing traumatic events. Notwithstanding this occurrence, teacher preparation programs offer little to address the concern, thereby creating preservice teachers who do not feel self-assured, knowledgeable, and efficient when supporting students who have experienced trauma.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand secondary teachers' perceptions of their preparedness in supporting students who have experienced trauma in a Midwest school district located in the United States. This narrative research design employed semi-structured interviews with seven secondary preservice teachers who were in their clinical practice during their final semester of undergraduate studies. Participants included four male and three female preservice teachers, six at the high school level and one at the middle school level. Content focus included one band/orchestra, three math, two English, and one social studies preservice teachers.

Preservice teachers could define trauma and identify pertinent examples of adolescent classroom behaviors, which might signal a history of trauma. Participants reported empathy and mentor teacher reinforcement as the most useful strategies in supporting students who may have experienced trauma. However, they indicated a lack of preparation regarding trauma-informed practices throughout their university coursework, which impeded their confidence and success in supporting students. Participants suggested potential reform in teacher preparation programs to further assist future educators' preparedness to support students who may have experienced

childhood trauma.

The discourse of this dissertation identifies important research concerns found in current education literature associated with trauma, adolescent cognitive, emotional, and social development, and teacher preparation programs.

Keywords: childhood trauma, trauma-informed teaching, adolescent cognitive, emotional, and social development, and preservice teacher preparation

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*“The greatest good you can do for another Is not just share your riches,
but to reveal to him his own.”*

~Benjamin Disraeli

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Dedication

To the adolescent youth from my past, in my present, and in my future, you have and continue to inspire me to be a better educator. I am honored to have been a part of your journey.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Personal Reflection

As I enter our youth residential facility daily, I put myself into a positive and relaxing mindset. When working with adolescents whose primary focus in our facility is to overcome their addictions, it is best to remind myself that their behaviors and attitudes are currently displaced. Some are still coming off their chosen drugs, while others are battling traumas and mental health issues beyond their addictions. I choose to do this. I have a special place in my heart for “marginalized” students. I know that most of their school experiences have not been positive; in fact, many of them have not been attending school regularly for years. Ironically, I see their addictions and traumas as representations of my own family. I recognize that I cannot fix their addictions or previous experiences, but I know I can do my best to make a difference. I have come to this place, to these students, because I have a special interest in their care. As teachers, I believe we should look beyond test scores and achievement and work to learn more about our students. I believe we should get to know the “whole child.” My daily experiences, however, remind me that my voice, my personality, my expectations, and my dreams and hopes for my students can trigger their deeper issues. Everything I have learned about relating to students goes to waste when that one student enters the classroom and decides he hates me, or that I remind him of a stepfather, or that I have too many expectations for a bunch of “tweakers.” There is nothing in my training or in my professional development that prepared me for my students. The strategies I use are based on a combination of self-learning that occurred over years of experience and interest. So, I breathe, deeply. I go to my place of calm. I put a smile on my face, and I put my best foot forward. I greet my

students with a smile and a morning meeting, and I hope for a good day, because I believe my students deserve the best I have to offer.

As I reflected on my work with adolescents, who in addition to their addictions also have experienced childhood trauma and have multiple mental health diagnosis, I wondered about other educators and their experiences with similar students. Teachers face increased challenges as incidences of trauma impact the students with whom they work. Additional challenges in working with trauma-exposed youth include inefficiency with maintaining a positive classroom environment, instructional concerns, and mutually respectful relationships built on trust. The U.S. Department of Justice's Defending Childhood initiative reports that more than 46 million adolescents experience trauma each year, with one in 10 encountering five or more violent incidents (Cook, 2015). Children endangered by recurring trauma are at risk for various physical and mental health issues—anxiety, depression, and substance abuse—that also alter their ability to learn, adding to the challenges of classroom teachers.

This chapter illuminates the complexities and significant components related to educating traumatized youth. I will discuss the significant characteristics providing the impetus for this study, as well as a theoretical framework explaining teacher preparedness, the effect of trauma on development and learning, and a context for understanding trauma-informed schools. In addition, the background of the problem, current research in the field of childhood trauma, brain development, trauma informed care, and the design of the study are discussed.

Situation to Self

Unfortunately, most educators lack the training and understanding of how childhood trauma influences decision-making and neural functioning in their students. An assortment of research discusses the effect of trauma informed care, yet few address the preparedness of

teachers or the professional development needed for increasing classroom pedagogy in this area. The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) reported that 17% of teachers leave the profession within their first five years of teaching (2015). When young educators lack mentors, environmental support, and classroom management skills, they burn out quickly and resolve to feeling a failure. To retain young teachers, and to support qualified established teachers, district and university programs must consider designing professional development and academic learning opportunities that better prepare educators in working with traumatized youth.

I returned to the classroom after spending many years as an instructional coach and as an adjunct professor for teacher candidates and first-year teachers. I was hired to develop an educational program that was a partnership between a local school district and the local county for a Secured Youth Residential Center (YRC-2). My passion and advocacy for marginalized youth seemed to be the perfect fit for this position. I believed that I had a connection, a clear understanding, from the place of where these students came. I had multiple years of experience working with at-risk, marginalized youth, so the challenge of developing this program was exciting. However, I was disappointed to learn after our first year of operation that changes in the juvenile justice law would cause our program to close, and in its place, an established youth residential treatment center would be relocated into our facility. My work continued with at-risk, marginalized youth, but the focus changed to substance abuse recovery.

I believed my connection and understanding of the youth with whom I worked came from personal experiences. During my freshman year in high school, my family became the legal guardians of two family members who experienced mental, physical, and sexual abuse. They had been in the foster care system for two years before coming to live with us. Their academic, social, and familial life stories were unfathomable to any of my experiences, but during that year,

and the subsequent years that followed, I lived the effects of their trauma as I saw the way it intersected with my family.

One of those intersections was with my brother. As a student, and as a child, I did what was asked of me, put forth the needed effort, and mostly used school as a social resource; nonetheless, I was motivated to teach because of the experiences of my brother. He exemplified the term marginalized in that he learned in different ways; friends and teachers often bullied him, and when my parents wanted him to repeat his first-grade year, teachers rejected their request, as they saw no need. At the end of his third-grade year, his teacher recommended he repeat the year, and thus started the turmoil in my brother's academic career (and my parents' mistrust of his teachers). When my family became legal guardians to my cousins, my brother turned to marijuana, and eventually other substances, to deal with the immediate change in our family. His behaviors became impulsive and he became more withdrawn from school. These behaviors followed him well into his adult years, and many were transferred to his daughter.

The experiences of my brother, my cousins, and my niece motivated me to consider the teaching profession, and after twenty-six years of experience in the field, I learned that lives intersect every day, and those intersected lives create stories. In *Engaging in Narrative Inquiry*, Clandinin (2013) stated, "people shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories" (p. 13). As a classroom teacher, I lived in the intersection of my students' and my own stories. Now, I realize, my past experiences shaped who I am as a teacher and what I believe about the students with whom I work. As I plan for student instruction, I create space to learn more about their "storied experiences" (Clandinin, 2013) with family, friends, academics, and community. I want to deepen my understanding of their perceptions and of their storied experiences.

As an instructional coach, I saw the ways in which perceptions, marginalization, microaggressions, and social policy intersected with classroom instruction, student and teacher behaviors, and academic achievement. More students were entering our classrooms with mental and behavioral health issues, special education needs were not being met for identified students, and a decline in socio-economic status created larger gaps in equality.

As a classroom teacher, I felt as if the storied lives of my students were rapidly changing. Their environments, traumas, experiences, and diagnosis were often more than I could imagine, and I wondered if I was prepared to create the appropriate space in which they could tell these stories effectively. I also wondered if I was prepared to hear and respond to their stories not only as their teacher, but as the adult who was currently present in their life. As a practitioner, I wondered about my peers' teaching experiences with traumatized youth. As a researcher, I wondered about teachers' perceptions of their preparedness of working with youth and how I might deepen my understanding through their narratives.

Background of the Problem

High stakes testing, technology, and current political climate create urgency for teachers to produce academically successful students. Additionally, today's students encounter a chronically violent world, which impede their academic progress. For urban youth, this chronic violence also exists in their neighborhood, which increases their propensity for later mental health difficulties and disruptive behaviors related to triggers of trauma. Forty-one percent of 2,248 6th through 8th and 10th grade students surveyed in an urban public-school system reported witnessing a shooting or stabbing (Costello, Erkanli, Fairbank, & Angold, 2002).

Urban neighborhoods are often deemed as low-socioeconomic, but in the state of Kansas, low-socioeconomic areas are also rural. In Kansas, 41%, compared to the national rate 43%, of

children live in low-income families (NCCP, 2015). These children seldom receive services related to trauma or mental health. In fact, estimates indicate 20% of adolescents have a diagnosable mental health disorder, and between 50% to 75% of juveniles acquire anxiety and impulse control disorders (such as conduct disorder or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorders) (Schwartz, 2009). When youth forgo needed care from mental health facilities, schools and teachers become the catalysts for intervention and cognitive behavioral change.

Mental health problems and trauma are not limited to youth in urban and rural neighborhoods. Giaconia et al. (1995) discovered that 43% of 384 eighteen-year-olds from a predominantly white, working class community in the Northeastern United States experienced a potentially traumatic event during their lifetime. According to Schwartz (2009), adolescent suicide is the third leading cause of death, and untreated mental health leads to academic problems in school, declining family relationships, engagement in high-risk behaviors, and potential affiliation with juvenile justice or welfare systems. This indicates the socio-economic divide does not deter trauma or mental health from today's youth or classroom environment.

The statistics indicate an ever-increasing problem for preservice and inservice teachers. The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) reported in 2011 that one-third of the nation's teachers worked in schools with a poverty rate of 50% or higher. It is fair to assume many student teacher placements occur in low socio-economic areas where high incidences of trauma occur (Schwartz & Proctor, 2000). Additionally, the prioritization of academic achievement creates an environment that negates the socioemotional development of students and leaves educators with limited development of skills in supporting students with trauma experiences (Morgan, Pendergast, Brown & Heck, 2016). The plethora of academic strategies provide

feelings of accomplishment rather than feelings of anguish, defeat, and inefficiency that occur when working with traumatized students.

Dewey (1915) states, “If we teach today’s students as we taught yesterday’s, we rob them of tomorrow.” I cannot begin to count the number of times I have used or heard this quote in professional development. Universities and school districts continuously ask teachers to reflect on this quote as they push for innovation in instruction, but in what ways are they considering this as they prepare preservice teacher education programs or professional development? Most traditional preservice teaching programs front load coursework isolated from applicable practice, and the majority of learned coursework is academic in nature (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Changes in the quantity of academic versus social, emotional, and cognitive coursework requires commitment to overhaul what has always been done to a more modern coursework agenda that includes the previously mentioned areas.

The little research that exists on teacher preparedness in relation to working with traumatized students suggests a gap in preservice teacher education programs (Davies, 2013; Layne et al., 2011; Morgan et al., 2015; Onchwari, 2009). With a greater understanding of the implications of trauma and its consequences on youth, the federal government has introduced more legislature regarding training. In fact, Purtle and Lewis (2017) conducted a review of federal legislative proposals from 1973 to 2015 that explicitly mentioned trauma-informed practice, and found 49 bills were introduced, with 28 bills being introduced in 2015 alone. Their analysis concluded that 71 sections contained trauma-informed language, and the highest proportion of those specifically targeted youth in primary and secondary schools (Purtle et al., 2017). The demand to better prepare preservice teachers has never been more important.

This study posits an in-depth investigation regarding the perceptions that exist in being prepared to work with today's student population. Moreover, it suggests specific curriculum content that is lacking from preservice education programs as well as professional development opportunities. Without delving into the perceptions of teachers within the United States, schools of education cannot begin to reform in authentic and purposeful ways. Preservice teachers need extended training in trauma informed care, social-emotional-cognitive development, and classroom management strategies that support both.

Trauma

“The high prevalence of unresolved trauma among the school-aged population is a public health epidemic that threatens children's academics and social mastery” (Craig, 2016, p. 29). Knowing that 26% of children in the United States will witness or experience a traumatic event before the age of four (National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention) increases the likelihood that today's teachers must be prepared with an arsenal of strategies to meet individual student needs in the classroom, the majority of which may not be academic in nature.

Costello et al. (2002) reinforces the limitless boundary of trauma event exposure amongst children in the general population. They further linked family histories of mental illness as a double risk exposure for both boys and girls. One in six students, who appear to have few adverse childhood experiences (ACE) or be “free from vulnerability factors,” experienced a minimum of one traumatic event (Costello et al., 2002, p. 110).

Social, emotional, and cognitive development

For students who have experienced trauma, social, cognitive, and emotional development is often impacted. Preservice teachers who take introductory courses in educational psychology

or special education might spend a week or two on such topics. Until preservice teachers experience student teaching, they have little to no interaction with these lapses in development.

When it comes to stress, students might regulate their behaviors by showing low energy, lack of motivation, aggression, or defiance. Students whose behaviors are triggered by those with whom they interact often exhibit fight, flight, or freeze behaviors. While this is taught in introductory psychology classes, exemplars of this behavior are often not identified. For example, fight, flight, or freeze behaviors exhibited by students can be identified in the following ways: “fight becomes hyper-aroused” and students “show this through defiance, noisiness, and prolonged acting out.” Flight or freeze behaviors include students who “zone out or appear unmotivated, disinterested, or sleep” (Craig, 2016, p. 32).

Teacher preparedness

Preservice teacher programs and professional development repeat the mantra “build relationships with students for a positive classroom environment and behavior management.” This advice does not necessarily hold true for traumatized students. Students with previous trauma experiences impulsively reenact these events. Preservice and inservice teachers feel the impact of this reenactment, as traumatized students seek out an adult, either the parent or another person of authority, to repeat adverse experiences hoping for a different scenario. If a different or desired outcome is not achieved, student behaviors escalate. When this occurs, teachers need above average self-monitoring skills. Staying calm in moments of crisis, handling and acknowledging (rather than denying) strong emotions, and maintaining a safe environment are not skills with which many new teachers are equipped. Furthermore, they need the skills to reassure students they are on their side and can keep them safe.

An intricate characteristic of today's teaching experience is the ability to promote resilience and rehabilitation for traumatized students. Part of this ability is the recognition of how early ACE experiences have played a role in neural development and its impact on social, emotional, and cognitive functioning. An increased understanding of how preservice and inservice teachers approach students to better comprehend their histories increases the likelihood of how to manage and interact with students in the classroom. Students behave with a purpose and it is imperative that educators understand what that behavior is telling them. Preparing preservice teachers with relevant and authentic experiences that expand opportunities to determine underlying messages of student behaviors makes or breaks their teaching success.

When educators feel better prepared to work with traumatized students, they are more successful in the classroom and can provide strategies that better support students. Craig (2016) suggests instructors can teach students to separate who they are from what they feel. Acknowledging emotions and validating feelings is a start. For example, when a student feels angry or frustrated, educators should name the emotion and validate that it is okay to have named emotions. Then they should offer replacement behaviors on appropriate ways to express emotions, reassuring students that their emotions do not define them as a person. Strategies may also include teaching self-soothing activities, such as the use of fidgets, and replacement behaviors. Creating predictable classroom routines that encompass a safe environment, a flexible learning space, and an option for student inclusion in decisions that directly affect them adds to the variety of academic strategies with which teachers feel comfortable. The plethora of academic strategies provide feelings of accomplishment rather than feelings of anguish, defeat, and inefficiency that occur when working with traumatized students.

Statement of the Problem

The statistics concerning student trauma experiences are alarming. Preservice and inservice teachers alike are hindered by the behaviors and challenges encountered as they work to provide academic learning opportunities, while trying to build relationships with their students, in a collaborative classroom environment. What do today's teachers really understand about educating students who have experienced trauma? What perceptions occupy the beliefs preservice and inservice teachers have in being prepared to work with such students? How do classroom instructors take time to build the necessary trust to learn more about their students and what they need to be successful in today's standard driven academic environment? Furthermore, how are teachers prepared and supported to work with said students?

Limited studies in the current research literature examine the perceptions of teacher preparedness as they work with students who have experienced trauma, specifically as it pertains to preservice teachers (Alisic et al., 2012; Onchwari, 2009). Trauma informed care and mental health have become common terminology within the realm of education; however, preservice teacher training programs spend minimal time addressing these epidemics with perfunctory, methodical instruction, and educators are rarely equipped to recognize trigger behaviors or to utilize instructional strategies to promote healthy social, emotional, and cognitive responses. The results of which can have precarious repercussions that affect teachers and students.

Purpose Statement

I want to develop an understanding of ways preservice teachers feel prepared to support students who have experienced trauma as told through their personal narratives. The qualitative research framework of narrative methods will guide my reflection on preservice teachers' experiences with student trauma as expressed through their semi-structured interview responses.

The purpose of my dissertation is to obtain information regarding preservice teachers' perceptions of (1) the needs of students experiencing child traumatic stress, (2) their role in supporting students experiencing child traumatic stress, and (3) their level of self-efficacy in supporting students experiencing child traumatic stress.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study has many implications. First, preservice teacher education programs are preparing students the way they always have: a lecture format, with some clinical experience before a prolonged preservice teaching experience (Darling-Hammond, 2009). As preservice teachers begin working with high incidences of student trauma, the reality of the preparedness, or lack thereof, might engage teacher education faculty in a purposeful and explicit conversation on what preservice teachers need to be successful in the classroom. The conversation might elicit an interdisciplinary collaboration between social work, educational psychology, special education, and teacher education programs. Coexistence of these areas in developing a stronger knowledge base for preservice educators can only improve their classroom success and career longevity. As schools of education have the previously mentioned conversation, they may also review the ways in which they support preservice teachers. A collaborative effort between programs may provide additional supports to the success of student teachers. In a dream world, preservice teachers may be visited by their preservice support team: social worker, curriculum and teaching supervisor, educational psychologist, and special education professors/supervisors who can provide a “whole-child” approach to student teaching.

Research Questions

How might inquiring into the cohesions and instabilities of preservice teacher's perceptions of preparedness deepen understandings of cultural, institutional, and social narratives

that shape our educational landscape today? My research is centered around the following questions:

- How do preservice teachers define trauma?
- How do preservice teachers perceive the impact of trauma on student learning in the classroom?
- What is the perception of preservice teachers' preparedness to support and educate students who have experienced trauma?

Definition of Terms

The following vocabulary terms are fundamental to the explanation of my research. Later chapters, specifically the literature review contained in Chapter 2, explicate and articulate these terms; however, the brief definitions below create the frame of the study pushing forward.

- ***Mentor Teacher***—The experienced educator who provides the clinical collaborative student teaching experience for preservice teachers.
- ***Emotional Dysregulation***—relational triggers by close personal contact that cause the inability of a person to control or regulate their emotional responses by reacting in an exaggerated manner to environmental and interpersonal challenges by overreacting: bursts of anger, crying, accusing, passive-aggressive behaviors, or creation of chaos or conflict may ensue (“Emotional Dysregulation Disorder,” n.d.).
- ***Executive Function***—"The executive functions are a set of processes that all have to do with managing oneself and one's resources, utilizing mental control and self-regulation, in order to achieve a goal" (Cooper-Kahn & Dietzel, 2008).
- ***Inservice Teacher***—A licensed, employed teacher with more than one year of teaching experience.

- ***Metacognition***—Deliberate conscious control of one’s cognitive activities.
- ***Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder***—Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that's triggered by a terrifying event — either experiencing it or witnessing it. Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event (“Post-traumatic Stress Disorder,” n.d.).
- ***Preservice training***—For this study, pre-service training is any training received while earning a teaching license or certification.
- ***Professional development***—For this study, professional development is any training received while employed as a teacher.
- ***Trauma***—For this study, trauma is defined as resulting: “from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.”
- ***Trauma-informed care***— “Trauma Informed Care is an organizational structure and treatment framework that involves understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of all types of trauma” (“What is Trauma Informed Care?” n.d.).
- ***University Supervisor***—The person assigned to assess, mentor, and support preservice teachers.

Research Plan

To procure understanding into the perceptions of preservice teachers’ preparedness in supporting traumatized students, this study followed a qualitative approach using narrative methods. Qualitative research methodology was optimal for this investigation because “qualitative research seeks to understand the world from the perspective of those living in it”

(Hatch, 2002, p. 7). I wanted to understand the perceptions of preservice teachers by analyzing semi-structured interview responses as narratives of their preparedness in educating traumatized students.

The use of the qualitative narrative research methodology informed a deeper understanding of the training and professional development that preservice teachers encountered in their preparations to teach traumatized students (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The intent of this research was to explore the perceptions of preservice teachers as they navigated the intricacies involved in being prepared as they experienced students in a classroom setting. Using responses from semi-structured interviews allowed me to share narratives of their perceptions, and narrative inquiry allowed an enriched representation of the lived experiences, or perceptions rather, of preservice educators (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Finally, narrative methods offered the researcher the opportunity to view educators' experiences from their personal perspectives as they taught those who have lived through the trauma (Riessman, 2008).

Conclusion

The reality is that today, some students are coming to school with high incidences of trauma and with more mental health problems than ever before. Meeting these demands creates obstacles for teachers as they work to balance academic achievement, high stakes testing performance, and socio-emotional development needs of their students. Educational leaders at the university and district level face difficult choices concerning priorities. University leaders must consider whether academic preservice teaching programs contribute to preparing them for the student population that exist in today's classroom. District leaders must consider the ways in which they can balance academic and trauma-informed professional development. This study highlights preservice teachers' perceptions of their preparedness in educating traumatized

students. As a result, it realizes the importance of embedding research-based training on trauma informed practice into schools of education and district-inservice programs.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Introduction

Preservice teachers enter the classroom with enthusiasm and excitement as they move toward their chosen career. Preservice teachers expect guidance and support as they grapple with curriculum, classroom management, professional learning communities, and student academic performance. When they are met with student behaviors with which they are not prepared, they become frustrated and hopeless. They lack confidence in their chosen career path and consider other options, or they remain in the classroom hoping for additional understanding and strategies to meet the needs of their students. This qualitative study utilizes the narrative framework as it investigates preservice teachers' perceptions on their preparedness in working with students who have experienced trauma or who have a mental health diagnosis. Though I am interested in studying the stories that teachers tell about student trauma, I realize that the ways that trauma is constructed in our society compose these stories. After developing the conceptual framework that informs learning more about teachers' perceptions of supporting traumatized students in the classroom, I present the pertinent strands of research that exist to understand trauma's definition and impact on adolescents. I first discuss adolescent brain development and its relationship to trauma, outlining major studies that have contributed to this area. Next, I discuss adverse childhood experiences and their relationship to trauma. Finally, I move back to discussing teacher preparedness in relationship to trauma and circle back to think about how teacher preparedness leads teachers to compose narratives about adolescent trauma.

Conceptual Framework

A paradigm shift in education, specifically about classroom instruction, is the use of neuroscience as means to better understand the social, cognitive, and emotional development of students represented in today's classrooms. Preservice teachers enrolled in educational psychology or early childhood

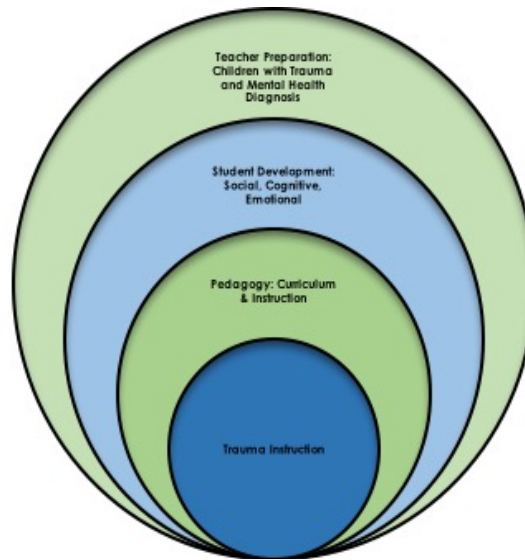


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

courses studied cognitive behaviorists such as Piaget or Vygotsky. In addition, they may have completed coursework on classroom management or on managing the hard to reach student. However, they rarely receive pertinent instruction or sustained development in working with traumatized or mental health diagnosed students (Alisic et al. 2012; Morgan et al., 2015; Davies, 2013; Layne et al., 2011). Experienced teachers also often lack further development in the social, cognitive, and emotional development of students (Greenberg et al., 2003; Layne et al., 2011; Morgan et al. 2015). Further coursework or professional development in this area could assist teachers in better understanding motivation, cognition, and emotional well-being of students and further define how stress affects these characteristics.

Preparing preservice teachers for the classroom traditionally has been a combination of classroom practicums and university coursework. Practicums provide a glimpse of what teaching is and university coursework provides the theory behind pedagogy and curriculum. The conceptual framework for this study is derived from a combination of theory and practice. Being

prepared for the classroom involves direct knowledge of curriculum and pedagogical practice. To prepare for working with traumatized or mental health diagnosed students, teachers must understand social, cognitive, and emotional student development. Universities and school districts must be aware of the pedagogy that aligns with serving a diverse population of student needs, which transfer to creating a trauma-informed environment. As evidenced by the conceptual framework (Figure 1), serving students who have experienced trauma or who have a mental health diagnosis requires a multi-faceted approach.

Teacher Preparedness

Teacher preparation programs. The importance of effective teacher education programs strengthens initial teacher effectiveness and increases the propensity for new teachers to stay on the job longer than their first year to gain more experience into their second and third years (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Currently, a typical teacher education program requires preservice teachers to enroll in a variety of courses that enhance their knowledge of content and pedagogy, which is then followed by an extended period that results in student teaching. However, after the development of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, schools of education transformed their programs to include more rigorous clinical practice, more in-depth study on special education and second language learners, and more critical coursework on student learning, assessment, and content (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Increasing the effectiveness of teacher education programs calls for the addition of coursework and application as it relates to student trauma and mental health. Furthermore, it calls for quality professorship within preservice teacher programs.

Craig, Kraft, and du Plessis (1998) determined that preservice education program success is based on structure and support, rather than on time. In fact, Lewin and Stuart (2003)

uncovered countries where university supervisors have little or no experience as classroom teachers or teacher coaches. Continued professional development or induction into teacher education programs are lacking, which creates a discrepancy in the quality of preservice instruction (Lewin & Stuart, 2003). These circumstances regulate the caliber of preservice teacher support; however, robust support networks for preservice teachers by their cooperating teacher counterparts in collaboration with university supervisors can dramatically bolster the preservice teacher's practicum experience.

The collaboration between preservice and cooperating teachers, along with their university supervisors, is the catalyst of support as all three contend with the complexities of today's students, especially regarding trauma and mental health.

Teacher preparation on mental health. Moon, Williford, and Mendenhall (2017) discovered that educators predominantly take students' mental health issues in earnest and perceive mental health topics as pertinent to their classroom roles and responsibilities; however, feelings of inadequacy lack in the professional preparation or continued development in this area. Mental health has predominantly been a function of special education preservice teacher programs. Yet statistically, one in five students experience signs and symptoms of a diagnosable mental health disorder, while two-thirds do not receive adequate care or services (Lechtenberger, Mullins, & Greenwood, 2008). This is especially disturbing as students spend much of their day in school, a place where staff is underutilized and ill-prepared in identifying early symptoms and interventions in mental health.

During the 2001-2002 school year, the United States Department of Education reported 476,908 newly diagnosed Emotional Behavioral Disturbance (EBD) mental health diagnosis, adding to the already estimated 9 million children already identified (Lechtenberger et al., 2008).

In school-aged children alone, the EBD mental health diagnosis is expected to increase to 50% by 2050 (Lechtenberger et al., 2008). Students with EBD rank amongst the “lowest graduation and highest dropout rates across disability groups” (p. 58). Student behaviors impede progress in the classroom and disrupt learning environments. Dysregulated students are often removed from class, placed in in-school suspension programs, and receive little support for replacement behaviors or learning goals. In fact, when asked about further training, educators expressed high concerns for better understanding of mental health issues, behavior management, and social skill training as further opportunities for development (Moon et al., 2017).

While pharmaceutical treatments exist for most mental health disorders, the most effective intervention includes family engagement in combination with schools and primary health care facilities (Lechtenberger et al., 2008). Early screenings exist, but there is a shortage of “competently trained personnel, especially on school campuses and child care centers where these assessments would be the most beneficial” (Lechtenberger et al., 2008, p. 57). This suggests an urgent need for university teacher preparation programs, school administrators, and educators to be well-informed on mental health screenings, specific needs, treatment services, and intervention strategies. Lechtenberger et al. (2008) emphasizes this urgency, “As children’s mental health becomes a priority and schools become a more positive, safe, and supportive learning environment, better academic outcomes will follow for all students, especially those with EBD” (p. 58).

Schools invest in multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) through school-wide Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS), individual behavior plans, and Student Intervention Teams (SIT). Preservice training often encompasses a week or two of classroom discussion on each topic without delving into the practical application of these interventions in an authentic

classroom setting. Consideration for preservice teachers to spend field experience work in SIT team meetings, in behavior intervention planning, and in further understanding MTSS exists at high prioritization. Furthermore, preservice practicum experience should occur across a variety of educational placements. Preservice teachers should experience general and alternative education settings and should work collaboratively with their peers in social work and educational psychology, the results of which could be constructive.

Teacher preparation on trauma. A critical element of preservice teacher training missing from core curriculum is significant comprehension of trauma-informed procedures and interpersonal pedagogy to engage marginalized youth. As is the case with mental health, most preservice programs build the capacity of special education teachers with an awareness of childhood trauma. However, as first responders in the classroom, general education teachers need increased training and development in this area.

Behavioral triggers and exhibitions by youth in the classroom may not all have their roots embedded in trauma. Disabilities, medical or health conditions, and temperament may impede learning (Downey, 2007), providing increased evidence that preservice and inservice teacher development must include training that differentiates these conditions. Morgan et al. (2015) posit, “The impact of having teachers who may not have the education, experience, and capacity to meet the complex social and academic needs of disenfranchised young people highlights a broader social problem in education” (p. 1039). In the world of high stakes testing, academic achievement is often prioritized over meeting the social and emotional needs of students.

The urgency of maximizing relational pedagogy in preservice teacher programs cannot be minimized (Morgan, et al., 2015). Preservice teachers armed with increased understanding of how trauma impacts academic achievement and social functioning elevates the ways in which

they interact with students in the classroom. Downey (2007) describes the effect of abuse and neglect on students as sleep deprivation, which manifests as lack of concentration in the classroom, decreased cognitive functioning, memory loss, and language delays, which embody reduced listening, understanding, and expressing skills. Moreover, the consequences on students' social awareness encompass "the need for control; attachment difficulties (including attainment to school); poor peer relationships, and the instability from frequent moving" (Downey 2007, 13). The inability to provide substantial academic training for preservice teachers nullifies their preparedness in understanding the social, cognitive, and emotional development of their students eliminating an important aspect of their future career success.

Summary. The previous literature suggests that teacher education programs and school districts need to do more to educate staff on the socio-emotional needs of students. When preservice teachers enter their chosen university programs, they usually identify themselves as age and content specific. Even further, some identify as specific to special education, English as a second language, social work, counselor, or school psychologist. Preservice education programs might consider eliminating the titles of certification and assume that every educator entering the field will have recurring roles in each of the specialties. Currently, the focus is on content and classroom management, both of which are important to a teacher's success. Similarly, district professional development opportunities are often engaged in these areas. Considering the implications of mental health and trauma on a student's social, cognitive, and emotional development should encourage teacher preparation programs and school districts to spend more time in these areas as the foundation of a teacher's success.

Student Development: Social, Cognitive, Emotional

Introduction. Emotional, audacious, hormonal, egocentric, and insecure are just a few of the stereotypical adjectives used to describe teenagers. Adolescence can be defined as the period of gradual change between childhood and adulthood, which intersect, yet are diverse regarding physical changes signaling puberty and physical development (Sommerville & Casey, 2010). During this time, adolescents partake in risky behaviors, struggle with identification, model immature self-regulatory competence, and wrestle with interpersonal relationships and communication skills. While they are “cognitively able to appreciate the objective riskiness of their behaviors” they often ignore these warnings, quite possibly due to peer, environmental, contextual, or internal emotional influences (Gardener & Steinberg, 2005; Steinberg, 2005). Educators increasingly find themselves in situations with emotionally charged adolescents focused on these characteristics.

The complexity of this developmental phase not only relies on the hormonal changes occurring in adolescence, but also relies on the plasticity of the brain. As developmental psychology increases research on brain structures and functioning in young people, educators must delve into changing negative adolescent stereotypes into an empathetic understanding of how they can provide supportive strategies that shape these qualities in a more positive light. To capitalize on adolescents’ capacity during this tumultuous time of brain development, educators can employ the following strategies into their daily lessons: choice, self-awareness, peer learning, affective learning, kinesthetic learning, metacognition, expressive arts, and real-world experiences.

The emphasis on brain development provides relevant research for educators to consider as they work to understand adolescent behaviors. Additionally, it provides the foundational

knowledge needed as teachers strive to increase adolescent skills in self-regulation, approaching conflict, identity development, and making healthy choices as they develop into young adulthood as contributing members of society. Being cognizant of this information permits teachers to develop a mindset that they can influence the way in which adolescents view themselves. Educator programs rarely provide enough background in neuroscience or experiential learning to develop this mindset and to practice key pedagogical skills in authentic ways, thereby increasing the emphasis on positive brain development. It provides educators, and others who work with adolescents, relevant strategies to enhance their growth. Furthermore, research suggests continued growth in identity formation, metacognition, and real-world experiences enrich adolescent brain development, all of which can be embedded in classroom lesson plans.

Implications of adolescent development for education. The implications of research on adolescent brain development in education is substantial. Teachers who work with this population need the proper training and professional development to increase their understanding of the best ways to engage, motivate, and plan instruction. As the primary observers of adolescent behavior, teachers can identify behavior changes. Moreover, “if knowledgeable, they can also provide coping assistance including emotional processing, distraction, and the reinstitution of familiar roles and routines” (Alisic et al., 2012). Identification and intervention strategies are lacking in teacher professional development, and learning communities often do not address the concerns with fidelity. Additionally, when adolescents become dysregulated in the classroom, teachers assess the behavior as oppositional and defiant, rather than as a trigger or a reaction to overwhelming stress and anxiety that accompanies the development occurring in their brain during this time. Alisic et al. (2012) discovered this to be true in their research, where teachers specified a deficiency of classroom support on how to equalize the needs all students.

The malleability of the adolescent brain identifies this period of growth as considerable in developing new competencies and forming a mature sense of self. Scientific evidence provides the justification that environmental factors, such as the classroom, significantly affect identity formation, metacognition, risk taking, executive function, and social understanding in adolescents. Knowing this information equips educators with the knowledge of when and what to teach and illuminates curriculum design and pedagogy with streamlined focus on “exploiting periods of neural plasticity that facilitate maximal learning” (Costandi, 2014). Examining adolescent identity formation, metacognition, risk taking, executive function, and social understanding provides the catalyst for improved strategies and instruction in the classroom.

Identify formation. Identity is something of which most adolescents struggle. During this time of brain development and hormonal transformation, identity seems to be in crisis, as adolescents do not know who they are or who they should be. In *Young Man Luther, A Study in Psychoanalysis and History*, Erikson (1958) posits,

I have called the major crisis of adolescence the identity crisis; it occurs in that period of the life cycle when each youth must forge for himself some central perspective and direction, some working unity, out of the effective remnants of his childhood and the hopes of his anticipated adulthood. (p. 14)

Secondary education is a giant leap for adolescents. They transition from an elementary setting that is often social in nature and nurtures exploration, inquiry, and collaboration. On the contrary, middle and high schools provide lecture settings with little to no collaboration or inquiry, which offers little in identity formation. In fact, evidence indicates classroom environment and academic work expectations have not evolved in ways that developmentally support the expanding cognitive edification, multi-faceted life experiences, and “identity-linked

motivational needs” that occur for children as they transition from elementary to secondary schools (Eccles & Roeser, 2011).

The cyclical relationship between collaboration and social interaction aspects of identity formation are prioritized in Eccles and Roeser’s (2011) research. They determined adolescent identities are fashioned through social interaction, which are subjective by their personal environments. Personal environments are formed in part by the peripheral organizations in which they choose and can participate. “These identities have implications for all aspects of their intellectual and social-emotional development” (Eccles & Roeser, 2011, p. 236). When teachers recognize this characteristic of adolescent brain development, they can relate experiences and materials to individual student interests, which not only engages them, but also improves academic achievement.

To promote self-awareness and identity, educators can use the following classroom strategies with adolescents: implement self-awareness assessments, create autobiographies, write journals, connect content to student’s personal lives, and teach mindfulness meditation (Armstrong, 2016). Prioritizing self-awareness assessments and teaching mindfulness meditation aligns with the belief that the brain is malleable.

Metacognition. Adolescents and teachers alike should embrace beliefs that learning difficulty is normal and is not a scar on student ability. Learning difficulty presents a negative identity for adolescents suggesting they are neither smart enough nor worthy of other ways to learn. Ellis, Denton, and Bond (2014) discovered that “very little attention has been paid to the kind of metacognition and reflective thought that might lead to student perceptions of what is true, beautiful, honorable, and worthwhile” (p. 4022). To eliminate this connotation, classroom lesson plans should include many opportunities throughout the day for students to reflect upon,

analyze, and adjust their learning. Larson (2000) supports this as he discusses adolescent initiative. He believes, “Initiative involves a temporal arc of effort directed toward a goal, an arc that might include setbacks, re-evaluations, and adjustment of strategies” (Larson, 2000, p. 172).

Those who work with teenagers should also emphasize the malleability of the brain; the more it is exercised, the more intelligence is cultivated. Yeager and Dweck (2012) confirmed the malleability of the brain in their research application of incremental theory, which emphasized “that people’s characteristics, which are based in the brain, have the potential to be developed” (p. 312). Dweck’s mindset theory emphasizes the malleability of self-awareness and belief systems. Likewise, learners who see intelligence as a permanent thing are prone to accept an ability-focused emphasis on education (Eccles & Roeser, p. 228).

Adolescents need real-world experiences with which to explore metacognition, decision-making, and application of learned information. Armstrong (2016) postulates when presented with real-world conditions, adolescents cope with matters associated to “hot” cognition, where immediate actions and suitable decision making produce the construction of “new neural connections between the emotional brain and the rational prefrontal cortex” (para. 2000). In working with adolescents who struggle with appropriate decision making, Larson (2000) acknowledges research aimed at preventing substance abuse, pregnancy, suicide, and violence, yet the application of this research defies elevation of constructive adolescent growth.

Research regarding inductive and deductive reasoning has established that performance is significantly improved when adolescents are asked to apply reasoning skills to personal experience or background knowledge (Byrnes, 2008). In other words, logical thinking and reasoning skills are knowledge-dependent. With more practice in real-world situations, adolescents can improve upon the reflection, analysis, and application of learned knowledge,

enabling them to make better decisions regarding risk, health, and social interactions.

Application of real-world experiences provides opportunities for qualitative or quantitative change, leading to cognitive development, which boosts a teenager's aptitude to accomplish healthy or adaptive outcomes.

Risk taking. Adolescent risk-taking behaviors, drug/substance abuse for example, add to the dysregulation of neural circuitry, and support the negative connotations attributed to being an adolescent. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (2008) reports that a yearly average of nearly one in five American teenagers between the ages of 12 and 17 participate in destructive or addictive use of illegal drugs or alcohol. The correlation between drug/substance abuse is particularly strong for adolescents who have experienced trauma and are diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Reports reveal that up to 59% of youth with PTSD consequently acquire substance abuse complications. Takagi et al. (2010) supports this finding as it relates to chronic inhalant use, which has been consistently associated with significant neuropsychological impairments, with deficits in learning, memory, and executive functioning being the most consistent.

Educators are quick to blame puberty or immaturity on these behaviors. However, research suggests there are three interacting brain systems critical to adolescent emotional, incentive, and cognitive control behaviors. Sommerville et al. (2010) suggest the brain systems include:

The amygdaloidal complex which is responsible for the medial temporal lobe, processes information of biological significance including emotional evocative stimuli, potential threats, and cues depicting the states of others. Ventral striatum supports decision-making behavior by signaling the anticipation and attainment of rewards, and serves to influence

motivation behavior via connections to the prefrontal cortex. Prefrontal cortex (PFC) navigates wide-serving cognitive functions including the implementation of cognitive control, regulation of emotion, rational decision-making, and complex cognition. (p. 127)

The disproportion between comparative development of the amygdala and ventral striatum, proportional to the PFC, escalates the propensity towards unbalanced emotional and reward sensitive behavior in adolescence (Sommerville et al., 2010). Basically, an adolescent's brain system is sensitive to reward; it feels good to take a risk. Conversely, the adolescent brain has yet to develop the "just say no" function. Impulsivity is somewhat out of their control.

Choudhury, McKinney, and Merten (2012) point to the myriad of MRI brain imaging research that characterizes adolescents as having the "propensity to behave recklessly, the inability to suppress impulses, the diminished capacity to regulate emotions," and the mismanagement of multiple tasks (p. 567). Cortical plasticity research, as previously stated, provides narrative to the assumptive belief that teenagers' compulsive behaviors—disorganized, underdeveloped, or maturing—perpetuate amplified risk for the inception of mental illness (Choudhury et al., 2012). The epistemology of research adopts the belief that adolescent brains are broken and abnormal; Choudhury et al. (2012) contributes the "perspective on the 'neurological' adolescent as the model of 'normal' adolescent" (p. 566). Adopting this belief as the norm, those who work with adolescents must reflect on the ways in which they can enhance interventions and pedagogical strategies, rather than use the plasticity of the teenage brain as an excuse for underperforming learning achievement and dysregulated behavioral outbursts.

With all the negative implications of risk-taking behaviors presented in adolescent brain development, what would happen if educators saw this as a strength? Teachers expect students to take risks in the classroom by engaging in conversations, sharing ideas, researching new

information, and extending important concepts. Some students achieve positive educational risk-taking without anxiety, yet others worry about what happens if they respond with the incorrect answer or look stupid in front of their peers. Teachers armed with the neuroscience of adolescent brain development could leverage misguided risk-taking behaviors into more purposeful behaviors directed toward creativity and learning (Costandi, 2014). An idea for redirection is including students in real-world applications of learning.

Identity formation and metacognition through real-world experiences increase adolescent choice and engagement in worthwhile activities, and decrease adolescent engagement in negative risk-taking behaviors such as drinking, drugs, and sexual activity. Eccles and Roeser (2011) revealed:

Being involved in constructive, organized activities and service learning settings are good for adolescents because (1) doing good things with one's time takes time away from opportunities to get involved in risky activities; (2) one can learn good things (like specific competencies, prosocial values, and attitudes) while engaged in constructive and/or service learning activities; and (3) involvement in organized activity and service learning settings increases the possibility of establishing positive social supports and networks prosocial values. (p. 235)

Creating service learning opportunities for adolescents increases their collaborative agency as well as provides practice in self-regulation of emotions and behaviors (Larson, 2000, p. 175).

Executive function. Executive Function defines the capacity that enables us to command and synchronize our thoughts and behavior (Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006). The skills associated with executive function include working memory, attention, response, and decision-making. "Each of these executive functions has a role in cognitive control, for example filtering

out unimportant information, holding in mind a plan to carry out in the future and inhibiting impulses” (Blakemore et al., 2006, p. 301).

A growing body of work connects executive function with brain development, specifically in the prefrontal cortex (PFC) (Blakemore, 2012; Carrion & Wong, 2012; Galvan & Rahdar, 2013; Paus, 2005). As discussed in the last section, synaptic pruning occurs in the PFC, which is responsible for executive function during adolescence. Employing executive function and social cognition during adolescence exercises increased brain function across various stages of life, which neuroscientific research supports (Scarborough, Lewis, & Kulkarni, 2010). As the adolescent brain matures, it should become more efficient when performing executive functions. However, when adolescents experience prolonged and recurrent mental stress, reactions can diminish brain development, resulting in dysregulation of neural pathways (Carrion et al., 2012).

To increase executive functioning in adolescents, educators can employ a variety of teaching and learning strategies for students. Providing real-world application of learned material will embed learning into long-term memory rather than working (short-term) memory. Comparing, analyzing, making predictions, collaborating in small groups, and applying learned information in different ways model the procedures in which they can prioritize and make sense of information. Finally, educators can model higher level thinking skills, such as metacognition, goal setting, and monitoring progress to name a few. Emphasizing time for student practice, development, and application of these skills promotes an effective brain-based learning environment.

Stress. Adolescents experience stress in a multitude of ways with a variance of severity. Hollis, Isgor, and Kabbaj (2013) posit that the brain is capable of differentiating stressors as physical and social, utilizing appropriate response pathways. As they studied adolescent chronic

unpredictable stress (CUS) exposure on brain and behavior on rats, Hollis et al. (2013) discovered decreased cognitive deficits in spatial learning after two weeks of unpredictable physical stress exposure. Furthermore, “unpredictable stress schedules often also include social stressors in addition to physical stressors” (Hollis et al., 2013, p. 233).

Considering trauma exposure as it relates to brain development, Carrion et al. (2012) believe “trauma acts as a threat to an individual’s well-being, thereby activating a neurobiological stress response” (p. S23). They performed the first longitudinal study on PTSD to detail a connection concerning hippocampal changes with post-traumatic stress symptoms (PTSS) and a biological marker of stress (Carrion et al., 2012). They focused primarily on cortisol levels, which if released in high doses can damage the inner workings of the hippocampus, leading to deficits in learning, primarily in verbal and visual memory performance. Researchers also studied PTSS and its effect on the PFC. They prioritized human imaging (MRI) of those who had lesions in the PFC, recognizing learning impairments in shifting attention and reversal of stimulus-reward associations, both of which are necessary to academic learning (Carrion et al., 2012). Results of this study indicated a demand for educators to understand their obligation to provide interventions that reduce stress, thus improving memory, and “behavioral interventions that develop cognitive control of attention to enhance prefrontal cortex and executive functioning” (Carrion et al., 2012, p. S27).

A study performed by Copeland, Keeler, Angold, and Costello (2007) revealed more than 68% of children and adolescents had experienced a potentially traumatic event by the age of 16. They further discovered full-blown PTSD was rare, occurring in less than one half of one percent of children studied. However, other impairments--including school problems, emotional difficulties, and physical problems--occurred in more than 20% of children who had been

traumatized. In those who had experienced more than one traumatic event, the rate was nearly 50%.

The statistics indicate that preservice and veteran educators need to deepen their understanding of how stress is manifested in the classroom. Student behaviors consisting of noncompliance, lethargy, and decreased academic growth may be signaling the stressors that occur in their daily lives. With statistically high incidences of trauma and the resulting stress, a permissible awareness of how stress impacts social understanding is imperative for a classroom teacher's success.

Social understanding. Impulsivity is the root of behavior during adolescent brain development. When they inappropriately engage with others or make inappropriate comments, a teacher's response elicits the following question: how do you think the other person feels? Social understanding implies a foundational understanding of perspective, something of which adolescents struggle. In fact, during adolescent maturation, "social behaviors, such as play, mating, and aggression, as well as alterations in brain gray-and-white matter volumes change to their adult-like patterns" (Eiland & Romeo, 2012, p.163). Neuroscientists recognize the structural and functional remodeling of the brain as adolescents' frontal and temporal lobes increase from childhood to puberty, only to be followed by the synaptic pruning and programmed cell death into young adulthood (Eiland et al., 2012, p. 163). This regulates the social understanding of juveniles. When adolescents have the capacity to see the view of another, they have the pivotal criteria for productive communication (Blakemore et al., 2006). Educators possess the responsibility of increasing adolescent perspective taking through effective planning and learning experiences.

Collaborative discussions and projects, as well as team building activities are a good place to start. Teachers can debrief these activities by not only asking what students learned in the process, but also by having them reflect on their group processes. Asking questions such as: what worked for your group today? what didn't work for your group? in what ways did you support each other in this process? and tell me about the behavioral cues (everyone close together, discussing topic, arms crossed, facial expressions, etc.) your team exhibited as you worked together? prompts students to consider how their interactions increase or decrease success. Teachers can also build the social capacity of students by taking time to asking effective questions as they relate to the emotional states of actors, images, literary characters, and lyrics. It is important for students to practice, reflect, and adjust their behaviors for favorable social understanding.

Identity formation, metacognition, risk taking, executive function, and social understanding do not exist in a vacuum. Executive function is intertwined with social understanding, risk taking, and metacognition. It is imperative as educators create learning opportunities based on these skills, they challenge themselves to deepen their practice in a multi-modal approach to adolescent learning.

Social, Cognitive, and Emotional Development Learning Environments. Designing an educational system based on social, cognitive, and emotional development research would combine many of the instructional practices along with adjusted school times, flexible learning environments, student choice in educational planning, and kinesthetic learning.

A myriad of research suggests that during this time of growth and development, adolescents need more sleep. According to Dahl (2002), the importance of sleep for adolescents exists at the intersection of the following factors: brain maturation; considerable biological and

psychosocial changes; and sleep deprivation, which causes negative effects on behavioral/emotional regulation and possibly increases the potential for psychiatric disorders. Their circadian rhythms, as well as an overabundance of homework, prompt them to stay up late, and school time schedules expect them to be fully present during early morning school hours. These reasons prompted senators in California to propose legislation that beginning in 2020, schools will not be allowed to start the day before 8:30 a.m. In creating an educational environment for adolescents based on brain development a later start time for school would be enacted.

Without the complications of student development, teenagers bring diverse learning modalities and skills into the classroom. Creating a flexible learning environment honors the diverse needs of a classroom. A flexible learning environment encompasses student choice and kinesthetic learning, which will be discussed later. Flexible environments create learning zones in the classroom or in the building. Desks can be replaced with tables, preferably round, to encourage collaboration and decrease barriers. High desks, or tables, provide a learning space for students who like to stand as they read, talk, explore content, etc. Rugs, large pillows, and bean bags in addition to traditional chairs can replace desks and create zones in the classroom specific to learning opportunities. For example, bean bags, rugs, and large pillows might be in a zone where literary discussions or brainstorming might occur. Learning labs might be created in zones where makerspaces can be utilized. This might also be the place where scientific explorations occur. There may be a technology zone for independent or group research. Walls might be covered with white boards to illustrate problem solving, organize ideas, or brainstorm. In this type of environment, teachers facilitate the learning process rather than control it as in the

traditional lecture format. Including students in creating the zones and the flexible learning environment provides them with ownership in process.

A prominent feature of flexible learning environments is organization. To the outside observer, it may look like chaos, but to the teacher and students who have organized the space, they have clear expectations on behavior and learning goals. They understand the ways in which they should move through the class and engage with others. They also know when to advocate for their personal learning and emotional needs.

Advocating for personal learning, students need choice in their educational plan. Teachers feel overwhelmed with the idea of planning for individual learning; however, the process should be a collaborative effort. Teachers guide the process of the educational plan, questioning students on the necessary steps they need to take for academic success. The input on the goals and planning come from the student with assistance from the teaching. Knowing that student choice is a key component of developing executive function, thus adolescent brain development, this buy-in is instrumental in their engagement in the academic process. Teachers and students can monitor this process through collaborative conversations, both formal and informal.

Finally, adolescents need to move. Kinesthetic learning increases brain function and taps into long term memory retention. It may involve the way students are moving through the classroom. Innovative examples of kinesthetic learning include placing exercise equipment in or near a classroom and offering students the opportunity to have academic discussions as they exercise or walk around a field or perimeter of the gym. Students could create movement to embed concepts needed for learning projects or assessments. Brain breaks should include

physical movement. Teachers who engage and move with their students model the importance of this, especially when students refuse to engage in physical activity.

Summary. The presented research renders a common emphasis on providing adolescents opportunities to engage in critical thinking, to teach them about mindset and the workings of their brain, and to demonstrate how to use metacognitive tools. The way to accomplish this is through real-world experiences that assist them in setting goals, utilizing their imagination, and working collaboratively. The adolescent brain is in constant development; the complexities of its workings make this developmental phase confusing for those who work with them. Nonetheless, educators armed with this information can provide a learning environment that honors, rather than punishes, where they are in their social, cognitive, and emotional development. As Armstrong (2016) reminds us, “When we remember the vulnerabilities, passions, friendships, and interests that drove us at that point in our lives, we walk for a few moments in the shoes of our students” (para. 1369).

Curriculum and Instruction

Previous research on teacher preparedness and student development regarding trauma suggests implicit reform in preservice teacher training and inservice professional development (Alisic et al., 2012; Crosby, 2015; Morgan et al., 2015; Onchwari, 2009). Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (2001) suggest, “Beginning with preservice education and continuing throughout a teacher’s career, teacher development must focus on deepening teachers’ understanding of the processes of teaching and learning and of the students they teach” (p. 82). Understanding the processes of teaching and learning includes specific educator curriculum and instruction on trauma-informed care and mental health.

The preparation of preservice teachers in mental health and trauma often occurs in special education classes or within the theme of mental health in an educational psychology class. School social workers, as well as school counselors, have some training in these areas, yet much of their day is not spent in general education classrooms. General education teachers do spend most of their day with students, further emphasizing the importance of reforming preservice education programs and professional development opportunities for educators.

Where do district and university personnel begin their quest for reform? In a study conducted to determine teachers' feelings regarding their preparedness in responding to trauma in urban school settings, Alvarez (2017) discovered that in 1140 school policy documents, "trauma was never mentioned" (p. 4). Koller and Bertel (2006) established that preservice teacher education programs deliver insignificant specialized competencies concerning educators' prowess to distinguish or intervene to an assortment of mental health concerns exhibited by today's students. Oddone (2002) reviewed mental health content in common educational psychology textbooks and found a decline in information regarding mental health, socio-emotional development, and personality, a decline that has occurred since 1950. Researchers are beginning to delve into this topic; however, "there are still few empirically-based training curricula for teachers in this area" (Ball, Iachini, Bohnenkamp, Togno, Brown, Hoffman, & George, 2016, p. 314).

Reformation advocates, such as Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (2011), ascertain "Teachers learn by doing, reading, and reflecting (just as students do); by collaborating with other teachers; by looking closely at students and their work; and by sharing what they see" (p. 83). The underpinning belief justified preservice teacher program restructuring that included the creation of professional standards. In addition to professional standards of teaching, the

reformation of preservice teaching programs included more time in classrooms, enabling application of skills throughout entire program. With the addition of professional standards, little has evolved in the review of what needs to be taught for successful interactions with students who have experienced trauma or who have a mental health diagnosis. Ball et al. (2016) reviewed state professional standards of teaching to student mental health competencies, of which there are six. As a result, they discovered the professional teaching standards in forty-eight states aligned with at least one domain of school mental health. Twenty states included content from every standard (p. 316). What the research lacks is the way in which teacher preparation programs have integrated curriculum and instruction in these competencies into required coursework.

Trauma Informed Teaching

Introduction. Teachers face increased challenges as incidences of trauma impact the students with whom they work. Additional challenges in working with trauma-exposed youth include inefficiency with maintaining a positive classroom environment, instructional concerns, and mutually respectful relationships built on trust. The vulnerability of trauma seems frequent amongst youth; structured clinical interview studies in the United States have revealed the likelihood that 43-68% of youth experienced at least one traumatic event (Reay, Rapheal, Aplin, McAndrew, Cubis, Riordin, Palfrey, & Preston, 2015). The U.S. Department of Justice's Defending Childhood initiative reports that more than 46 million adolescents experience trauma each year, with one in 10 encountering five or more violent incidents (Cook, 2015). Children endangered by recurring trauma are at risk for various physical and mental health issues— anxiety, depression, and substance abuse—that also alter their ability to learn, adding to the challenges of classroom teachers. Unfortunately, most educators lack the understanding of how these stressors influence decision-making and neural functioning in their students, especially

given the continued research on brain development. Educational policy must consider the ways in which communication, collaboration, and pedagogical practice impact students, teachers, and administrators who work with traumatized youth.

As local and national budgets continue to negatively influence roles and responsibilities of school learning communities, students find themselves without school counselors and social workers to support their needs. Teachers are not licensed social workers or counselors; therefore, many reject the actuality that it is their responsibility to teach more than content and skills. When it comes to teaching more than content, educators lack confidence in their skills to provide trauma-informed care. “Classroom staff and teachers are increasingly aware of the ubiquitous role that trauma and chronic stress play in children’s learning and development but feel uncertain about how to provide optimal support and struggle with distinguishing their role in the healing process” (Anderson, Blitz, & Saastamoinen, 2015, p. 114). Teachers often leave the profession because of their attempts to maintain a positive classroom environment where traumatized students come emotionally charged and behaviorally dysregulated (Brunzell et al., 2018). Without suitable guidance or mediations, the recurring nature of trauma can have a devastating effect on both students and staff.

Educational professionals need to cultivate relationships with students that foster emotional awareness and development. Educators who negate the emotional components of teaching and learning can become fatigued from perpetual conflicts with learners’ emotional states, excusing undesirable achievement on learner stress and lack of maturity (Wormeli, 2015). Because of this, working with trauma-exposed students requires increased understanding of trauma and the effects on student achievement and curriculum. Importantly, teachers,

administrators, and educational policy must present relevant professional development on trauma-informed practices.

What is trauma? Trauma arises when a child experiences an overwhelming event that endangers or induces damage to his or her emotional well-being (NCTS, 2008). The recognition

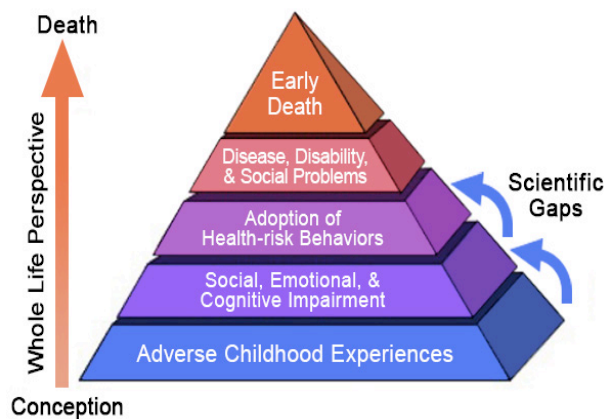


Figure 2: Aces Influence. Retrieved June 10, 2017 from: <https://www.samhsa.gov/capt/practicing-effective-prevention/prevention-behavioral-health/adverse-childhood-experiences>

of trauma as it relates to today's students was heightened by the results of The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACES). ACES has become well known in education as teachers recognize the breadth of behaviors students exhibit because of their experiences.

Originally, this study was conducted from 1995 to 1997, with over 17,000 participants in Southern California completing confidential

surveys regarding their childhood experiences during their physical exam (cdc.org). The surveys addressed two strands: abuse (psychological, physical, and sexual) and household dysfunction (exposure to substance abuse, mental illness, violence, and criminal behavior). ACE became known as one of the largest investigations of childhood abuse and neglect and later-life health and well-being. The ACE Pyramid (Figure 2) emphasizes the influence of long-term effects; hence, teachers, administrators, and educational policy makers must consider advanced training and curriculum overhaul for working with traumatized students.

The researchers provided exemplars to further develop the strands of the adverse childhood experiences students face, which include but are not limited to: parents separated or divorced, the child or sibling being sent away from home, an unemployed parent(s), parent

experiencing alcoholism or substance abuse, witnessing an injury or murder, experiencing sexual abuse and/or assault, being physically assaulted, physically abused, and/or seriously neglected, and being threatened or held captive (Schilling, Aseltine, & Gore, 2007). The ACES study emphasized that many of the students who experienced trauma might also experience post-traumatic stress and emotional dysregulation. Childhood trauma is associated with mental illnesses, such as depression, anxiety, personality disorders, and even psychosis (Reay et al. 2015). Studies have indicated a direct correlation between ACES and health risk behaviors and disease in adults (Felitti et. al., 1998; Breslau, Wilcox, Storr, Lucia, & Anthony, 2004; Kilpatrick, Ruggiero, Acierno, Saunders, Resnick, & Best, 2003; Schilling et al., 2007; Schilling et al., 2008). Additional studies report the impact on academic achievement for youth. Now more than ever, teachers and administrators need specific strategies and reinforcements to effectively support students in their classrooms.

To know the strategies and reinforcements needed in curriculum and classroom support, educators must have a clearer awareness of how many students experience trauma and the number of traumatic events experienced. Explicitly focused on adolescents, Schilling et al. (2007) advised, “For many youth, this is a tumultuous time, as evidenced by a higher frequency of exposure to major life events and higher rates of mental disorder than at any other life stage. Mental health consequences of ACES may disrupt these normal developmental processes, increasing the risk of poor adult adjustment” (p. 2). Their study specifically hoped to identify gender and racial differences in the self-reporting of trauma and adversity. They monitored the self-reporting of depression, drug use frequency, and incidences of antisocial conduct as related to ACES.

What they discovered has an impactful effect in the classroom. For example, all ACES had impinged on at least one mental health diagnosis and eight of the ten ACES were substantially related to elevated depressive symptoms. Nine of ten ACES were significantly related to drug use and eight of ten were directly related to antisocial behavior. Regarding gender, boys reported more frequent antisocial behaviors and drug use, while girls reported higher incidences of sexual abuse or assault (Schilling et al., 2007). The latter caused more antisocial behavior and depression in boys than girls. Ethnicity provided intriguing results. African Americans and Hispanics would need to experience more than twenty ACES to report the same amount of drug use as a Caucasian who reported the combined effect of the following experienced ACES: being sent away from home, alcoholic parent, and being threatened with a weapon (Schilling et al., 2007). Hispanic students reported the greatest depressive symptoms, and Caucasian students indicated the highest level of drug use. The results are extreme, and as educators work diligently to meet student individual needs, they must also consider that many of their students, regardless of gender or race, have experienced at least one impactful ACE. The critical need for prevention and intervention strategies, for use in the classroom, targeting early adverse experiences and their mental health consequences has never been greater.

Should the type of trauma experience matter? Costello et al. (2002) measured incidences of what they defined as high magnitude (death of a loved one, witness to event, serious illness, serious accident, natural disaster, fire, war/terrorism, toxic exposure, cause of death or harm, nonfamily violence, family violence, captivity, sexual abuse, rape, and coercion) or low magnitude (new child in home, pregnancy, parental separation, parental divorce, new parental figure, moved house, changed school, lost best friend through move, breakup with best friend,

breakup with girl/boyfriend, parental arrest, reduced standard of living, forced separation from home) traumatic events. The results highlighted:

One in four children reported one or more lifetime events falling into the high magnitude or extreme stressor category. Of the 25% of children reporting an extreme stressor, the majority (72%) had only one during their lives, 18% reported two such events, and the remaining 10% had three or more. The most commonly reported high magnitude events were death of a loved one (parent, caretaker, sibling, or best friend), witnessing a traumatic event, learning about a traumatic event, and sexual abuse. (Costello et. al, 2002)

As presented earlier, this study validated that girls were more likely to report sexual abuse, rape, or coercion, while boys more often reported causing death or severe harm to others. In terms of the number of traumatic events experienced, 71% reported one event, 21% reported two events, and 8% reported three or more, and a family history of mental illness doubled the exposure (Costello et. al, 2002). A distinction of the Costello et. al (2002) research was that it included children whose lives were free from vulnerability factors; one in six had suffered at least one traumatic event.

As continued research explores the higher incidences of trauma young people experience, educators must be prepared to adjust classroom instruction to meet individual needs. The conflict between addressing students' socio-emotional health and monitoring academic growth creates stress and adversity amongst educators. Demands exist for curriculum overhaul to better meet students' socioemotional and academic needs.

Achievement. The advocacy for traumatized youth by teachers is unique, as traumatic experiences can have an enduring imprint on students' socioemotional, cognitive, behavioral,

and academic functioning (Crosby, 2015). Youth who have suffered trauma early in life exhibit reduced prosocial behavior and increased aggressive behavior (Black, Woodworth, Tremblay, & Carpenter, 2012). High school youth who endured more than one trauma incidence had a measurably heightened risk of violence perpetration, and abuse and neglect experiences increased a youth's inclination to self-harm (Black et. al, 2012). Teachers see evidence of these behaviors in class daily and question the effects of these behaviors on academic success.

Childhood traumatic experiences have been associated with deficiencies in academic success. For example, students who experienced PTSD performed inadequately on attention tasks and struggled with executive function (Carrion et al., 2012). Furthermore, they experienced heightened impulsivity behaviors and long-term memory deficits for verbal information (Beers & Debellis, 2002). Traumatized students often disengage from school, increasing truancy and decreasing high school graduation rates (Crosby, 2015). Lower grade point averages, insufficient achievement test scores, and decreased course grades render students hopeless, triggering objectionable behaviors that lead to suspension, expulsion, and school failure.

These student behaviors present obstacles in the classroom for teachers and other students. First, as teachers work to manage the classroom, they need specific skills to teach replacement and self-regulatory behaviors to students who lack impulse control. Second, the learning environment for other students is impaired. For those students actively engaged in their learning, disruptions cause them to lose important information and they are distracted from their work. Finally, teachers need administrative support, free from judgment, in developing appropriate skills, having time to plan and confer with peers on appropriate interventions and supports, and increasing relational opportunities with students.

Classroom educators fear the latter due to being evaluated on student academic achievement and summative assessment scores. Implementing trauma informed practices and curriculum has the potential to increase student engagement and executive function while meeting the socioemotional and academic needs.

Trauma-informed practice. Schools are an open invitation for all students, thereby creating the perfect opportunity to improve academic achievement for traumatized students. Reformatting school environments to be trauma informed requires the buy-in of administrators, teachers, and students alike. Administrators, and educational policy makers, must consider the implications of policies as they relate to discipline, collaborative professional development, and mental health community partnerships (Crosby, 2015). Increases in student prosocial behaviors, academic achievement, and classroom engagement, as well as teacher gratification and school climate are just a few of the benefits for establishing trauma informed schools.

Schools are increasingly changing environmental and engagement strategies for students. Trauma informed practice utilizes many strategies effective teachers already know. For example, problem-based learning increases students' capacity to think critically about solutions that could impact their world. Engaging students in the classroom fosters a feeling of self-worth and ownership in the classroom environment. Giving students choice in their educational and behavioral plans builds executive function and increases self-monitoring efforts. Setting incremental, achievable, and realistic goals increases academic success and self-efficacy. Simply stated, when teachers let students know they care about them academically and emotionally, they emphasize acceptance and interest in traumatized youth.

Conversely, challenges exist in forming trauma environments. The school environment is just one factor in a student's life. When they leave school, they may return to environments that

perpetuate feelings of trauma or impede personal relationships. Therefore, teachers, administrators, and other staff in trauma-informed schools must assist in developing positive social skills and interpersonal relationships for traumatized students. This means being fully aware of the peer relationships that exist for students. They should teach communication skills, such as active listening and conveying needs, in the classroom and authentically in the school environment. Another relationship of which to be aware is that of the teacher and student. Traumatized students are sensitive to adult acceptance; as adults interact with students, they should be cognizant of their tone of voice and messages students might misinterpret. Discipline is an example of this interaction.

Discipline. A key feature of trauma-informed practice is maintaining a calm, relaxed, and focused environment for learners to feel comfortable and successful. When teachers recognize triggered behaviors in class, trauma informed practice encourages them to deal with the issues rather than to participate in the outbursts by reacting in frustration or by feeling victimized by student anger (Craig, 2016). Common teaching practice is to use an aggressive tone or strong words to achieve effective discipline (Anderson et. al, 2015). However, a trauma informed model considers misconduct as an “opportunity for socio-emotional learning, and while the lessons teaching desired behavior need to be clear, the tone should be caring and instructional” (Anderson et. al, 2015)

Professional development. Changing the way educators, administrators, and those who make educational policy respond to today’s students requires purposeful reconsideration of how teachers are prepared for the classroom and how their skills are developed over time, once they are in the classroom.

In a teacher development study, conducted in the Netherlands, concerning supporting children after trauma, 9% of teachers reported participation in training relevant to supporting trauma-exposed youth within the past three years. Alisic et al. (2012) discovered “many teachers found it difficult not to get emotionally involved too much; to find their position as a teacher of academic skills versus mental health care provider; to know the best ways to support children after trauma; to know when children need professional mental care; and to know where they could find information about traumatic stress” (p. 100).

The Alisic et al. (2012) study was the first of its kind, as most research focuses on the implementation of school-wide behavioral programs. The results indicated that teachers felt incompetent in the ways with which they should support trauma-exposed youth. It also revealed a necessity for further research on the professional development of educator pedagogy as it relates to trauma-informed practice in the classroom.

Experts agree that good professional development entails effective administrator and teacher leadership, job-embedded professional development, and professional learning communities. Many consider professional development to be a formal activity, such as a conference, seminar, or workshop. The reality is that professional development can be less formal, especially as it engages conversations between coworkers, promotes peer observations, solicits independent reading, conducts research, and performs observations of and from a peer. It works best when it occurs in the context of teachers’ work during the school day. Efficient professional development empowers educators to cultivate the understanding and talents they need to tackle students’ learning challenges. To meet educator’s learning needs, professional development necessitates purposeful and relevant planning followed by vigilant implementation

with constructive feedback. Participation in professional development requires application of newly learned skills in classroom instruction.

Only when teachers improve their practice and administrators improve their leadership can professional development be deemed successful. Hargreaves and Fullen (2012) address this in their book, *Professional capital: Transforming teaching in every school*. They believe in developing the capacity of teachers through trust, empowerment, and teacher leadership. Therefore, developing trauma-informed practice in schools will require a collaborative culture grounded on trust, shared experiences, a socio-moral responsibility, and transparency. Most importantly, professional learning can only remain effective if it is sustained over time.

To assist the important classroom work, schools must offer professional development and learning opportunities directed toward recognizing signs of repetitive trauma and how to better understand its effect on students. Social, emotional, and behavioral programs need to be collaboratively developed with all staff, which authentically builds the capacity of teachers as they deepen their understanding of trauma informed care (Desrochers, 2015). Professional development and learning opportunities should be a collaborative effort with community partnerships as well.

Community partnerships. A study conducted by Anderson et al. (2015) examined the significance of a collaborative partnership between a local community school and a university's faculty. The premise of the study was to determine the strength or lack of agency educators felt towards professional development as it related to trauma-informed practice. The study began with an introduction of trauma-informed practice and the way it impacted children's behavioral responses during a regularly scheduled faculty meeting.

The following themes emerged: a concern regarding youth's increased experiences to trauma and stress at home; the increase of stress by both students and staff in the school environment; the interference of social emotional needs and disruptive behaviors on student learning; the lack of adequate professional support in trauma informed care; the lack of educator empowerment; and the benefits of trauma-informed professional development (Anderson et al., 2015). Anderson's study focused only on educator's facilitation of trauma-informed practice in the classroom, thus it lacked observation of practice and true pedagogical changes over time. It also emphasized the value of collaboration of all school staff in providing trauma-informed practices citing, "strong relationships among teachers and classroom staff is fundamental for optimal teaching and learning" (Anderson et. al, 2015, p. 130).

The study revealed the importance of the university school partnership. The contribution universities impart to meet growing community needs, as well as the collaborative partnerships between universities and schools must evolve. "Schools are asking for help from university social work and teacher education faculty to help them better support children's cognitive and social-emotional development" (Anderson et.al, 2015, p. 132).

Additional research supports the collaboration between mental health and schools (Ball et al., 2016; Greenburg, Weissberg, O'Brien, Zins, Fredericks, Resnick, & Elias, 2003; Mendelson, Tandon, O'Brennan, Leaf, & Ialongo, 2015; Moon et al., 2017). Mental health practitioners can furnish a deeper understanding of the cognitive and behavioral processes exhibited in traumatized students. Unfortunately, a disconnect exists in the way mental health is developed in schools. Mental health professionals provide lessons for one or two sessions; regrettably, they do not sustain implementation of learned material over time. Meanwhile, mental health is brought

into specific content areas without integration into the whole-school process (Wyn, Cahill, Holdsworth, Rowling, & Carson, 2000).

Students do not learn in isolation, nor can they develop skills if they do not have ample opportunities to authentically practice. This is true in the classroom and in community partnerships. A trauma-informed approach expects that the whole-school participate. Anywhere a child may be, he or she can expect consistent practice and interactions with and among the adults in the building. Providing mental health and cognitive behavioral strategies should be endorsed in all content areas, within all areas of the school environment. Long-term partnerships with the community should sustain continued support of students and teachers as both strive for academic and student success.

Conclusion

This research affords educators empowerment, as they determine the best approaches to meet the socioemotional needs of traumatized students and increase students' academic achievement. When educational policy makers and administrators make a commitment to increased time for teacher collaboration, professional development can inform those who work with trauma-exposed youth on the neurobiology of trauma. The effects of which will embed trauma sensitive interventions into the appropriate instructional pedagogy that most teachers already use. They will be more cognizant of the physical and emotional safety needed by students. Committing to teacher-led professional development encourages trust and positive relationships that will transfer to the classroom setting. Trauma care in schools is a collaborative effort.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

Teachers face increased challenges as incidences of trauma impact the students with whom they work. Additional challenges in working with trauma-exposed youth include inefficiency with maintaining a positive classroom environment, instructional concerns, and mutually respectful relationships built on trust. The U.S. Department of Justice's Defending Childhood initiative reports that more than 46 million adolescents experience trauma each year, with one in ten encountering five or more violent incidents (Cook, 2015). Children endangered by recurring trauma are at risk for various physical and mental health issues—anxiety, depression, and substance abuse—that also alter their ability to learn, adding to the challenges of classroom teachers.

A paradigm shift in education, specifically about teaching and learning, includes the use of neuroscience as a means to better understand the students represented in today's classrooms. Layne, Ippen, Strand, Stuber, Abramovitz, Reyes, Jackson, Ross, Curtis, & Lipscomb (2011) revealed that although trauma and mental health have seen an increase in diagnosis, graduate mental health training programs are finding it difficult to integrate "trauma-specific education into existing curricula" (p. 244). This is true for teacher preparation programs. Preservice teachers enrolled in educational psychology or early childhood courses studied cognitive behaviorists such as Piaget or Vygotsky. In addition, they may have completed coursework on classroom management, general special education monitoring, or managing the hard to reach student. However, they rarely received pertinent instruction or sustained development in working with traumatized or mental health diagnosed students. In fact, Koller et al. (2006) discovered teacher preparation courses of study offered minimal competence-based instruction pertaining to

an educator's prowess to recognize or intercede in a multitude of mental health/trauma behaviors exhibited by today's students. Furthermore, experienced teachers often lack further professional development in cognitive brain function and neuroscience as it relates to mental health and trauma. Teachers consistently report they feel inadequate and ill-prepared in addressing the mental health and trauma induced needs of students (Alisic et al., 2011; Ball et al., 2016; Williams, Horvath, Wei, Van Dorn, & Johnson-Redi, 2007). Additional coursework or professional development in neuroscience could assist teachers in better understanding motivation, cognition, and emotional well-being of students and further define how stress affects these characteristics as they pertain to trauma and mental health.

Qualitative Research

The statistics regarding trauma is frightening. As educators work with students, in what ways are they challenged by the beliefs and assumptions they have about connecting and collaborating with their students? What do today's teachers really know about working with students who have experienced trauma? Trust is in demand in many of today's classrooms, and the supply is short from students and staff alike. How do teachers' assumptions determine these relationships? Do they impair students who they believed to be problematic in their classrooms? How do they take time to build the necessary trust to learn more about where their students came from and what they need to be successful in today's standard driven academic environment? What are their perceptions in being prepared to work with traumatized and mental health diagnosed students?

When considering the assortment of previously mentioned questions, it was important to select the most desirable methodology that would reveal the intersecting experiences between teachers' perceptions of being prepared to work with traumatized or mental health diagnosed

students and the realities of teachers' preparedness that they encountered once in the classroom with said student group. Qualitative research provided the impetus for such study, as it embodied the intricateness of "social interactions expressed in daily life" and the connotations participants assign to these interactions (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 2). According to Marshall et al. (2016), characteristics of qualitative research include: authentic environments, numerous strategies that honor the credibility of the research, prioritized perspective, innovative implementation, and genuine translation. Qualitative research appeals to the researcher who wants to learn about people, their thoughts, and their interactions in a naturalistic setting. Logically, qualitative researchers seek to understand and facilitate change.

Contemplating qualitative research suggests an awareness of its typologies. Creswell (2013) proposed the following genres: ethnography, narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, and case study. Ethnography integrates long-term immersion by the researcher into groups, communities, or organizations. Phenomenology constructs shared experiences of participants' lived experiences (Marshall et al., 2016). Shared experiences are presented through several individual, in-depth interviews. Data into theory describes the attribute of grounded theory, "an overall approach to inquiry with the primary purpose of generating theories to explain the interactions or settings of interest" (Marshall et al., 2016, p. 18). Case studies may be the most complex of qualitative research as they implicitly focus on the circumstance of dynamic relationships. The objective of case study research is to realize the ambiguity of a study in the most exhaustive manner. Case study utilizes various methods enabling more constructive understanding of a study for researchers. Finally, I used narrative methods in my qualitative study.

Narrative Methods

Educators detail their day through events, experiences, viewpoints, or short stories. Personal narratives construct the details of how teachers tell their stories and what they know to be true. Kim (2016) describes the duality of narrative as “telling as well as knowing” (p. 6). She goes on to describe story as the “detailed organization of narrative events arranged in a (story) structure based on time, although the events are not necessarily in chronological order (Kim, 2016, p. 8). Reismann (2008) summarizes storytelling as a connected sequence of events retold by a speaker who creates meaning for the listener to take away (p. 3). Clandinin (2013) defines “narrative inquiry [a]s a way of studying people’s experiences, nothing more and nothing less” (p. 38). Therefore, inquiring into teacher’s experiences, venturing into their individual development, constructs the narrative as a successful strategy for inquiring into their preparedness in educating traumatized students.

Educators bring a variety of backgrounds and experiences as they support today’s students. Years of teaching, university coursework, professional development, and varying roles within education provide a wealth of knowledge and experience as it relates to their expertise. Teacher narratives provide insight into the school community, student relationships, and levels of support. In fact, Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) confirms narrative “is a way of understanding and inquiring into experience . . . it is situated in relationships and in community, and it attends to notions of expertise and knowing in relational and participatory ways” (p. 13). These stories provide the foundation needed to further understanding on preservice teacher’s perceptions of being prepared to support traumatized students.

Experienced educators have previous education and personal experiences to corroborate their stories of working with students of trauma and mental health. Preservice teachers also have

prior experiences as students, but they rely on their university coursework (methods) to shape their interpretations. Clandinin, Huber, Huber, Murphy, Murray Orr, Pearce, and Steeves (2006) explain,

People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. Narrative inquiry, the study of experience as story, then, is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience. Narrative inquiry as a methodology entails a view of phenomenon. To use narrative inquiry methodology is to adopt a particular view of experience as phenomenon under study. (p. 375)

Preservice teachers bring their scholarly knowledge to the classroom in hopes of being supported by university supervisors and cooperating teachers who have years of experience that shape their teaching landscape. As Webster and Mertova (2007) explain, people change their stories as the events in their lives change “because stories do not exist in a vacuum, but are shaped by lifelong personal and community narratives” (p. 2). For experienced educators, these narratives have changed throughout their years of teaching and various educator roles; for preservice teachers, these narratives change from the university classroom to the classroom for which they must be prepared to teach twenty plus students and meet their individual needs.

In their belief that people need story, Dyson and Genishi (1994) contend that narratives are authentic connections to the world and relationships to which one lives:

Stories help to make sense of, evaluate, and integrate the tensions inherent in experience: the past with the present, the fictional with the ‘real’, the official with the unofficial, personal with the professional, the canonical with the different and unexpected. Stories

help us transform the present and shape the future for our students and ourselves so that it will be richer or better than the past. (p. 242-243)

Teachers narratives as told through their interviews, then, describe their interactions within the classroom, identifying their tensions between experience and being prepared to work with traumatized and mental health diagnosed students.

A great deal of learning comes from experience. As educators gain more experience, their perceptions of being prepared to work with various students change. John Dewey had a strong belief in experiential learning. In his book, *Experience and Education*, Dewey (1938/1997) postulates the meaning of experience is “part of the problem to be explored” (p. 25). He believes that experience is a combination of give and take. This transaction, further described by Kim (2016), as “active and passive” suggests “when we experience something, we do something with it” (p. 70). Dewey confirms, “We do something to the thing and then it does something to us in return” (p. 78). Riessman (2008) postulates, “stories reveal truths about human experience” (p. 10). To further the idea of experience, Riessman continues, “Interrogating the stories uncovers how we ‘imbue life events with a temporal and logical order to demystify them and establish coherence across past, present, and as yet unrealized experience’” (p. 10). The nature of experience combines dynamic and inactive components. In this pragmatic view of experience, teachers’ narratives arise from experience and must return to that experience for their validation of who they are and how they want to be known.

Challenges Associated with Study

A few challenges exist in conducting a study on teacher perceptions. Narrowing the breadth of complexities to teacher preparation is at the forefront of the study. Identifying the theoretical constructs that shape teacher preparation is more complex and will be discussed in the

theoretical framework. Unfortunately, most educators lack the training and understanding of how childhood trauma and mental health influence decision-making and neural functioning in their students. An assortment of research (Layne et al., 2016; Ball et al., 2016; Nicoll, 2014; Greenberg et al., 2003; Mendelson et al., 2015) discusses the effect of trauma informed care, yet few address the preparedness of teachers or the professional development needed for increasing classroom pedagogy in this area. Moreover, The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) reported that 17% of teachers leave the profession within their first five years of teaching (2015). When young educators lack mentors, environmental support, and classroom management skills, they burn out quickly and resolve to feeling like failures (Darling-Hammond, 2010). To retain young teachers, and to support qualified established teachers, district and university programs must consider designing professional development and academic learning opportunities that better prepare educators in working with mental health diagnosed and traumatized youth.

Preparing preservice teachers for the classroom traditionally has been a combination of classroom practicums and university coursework. Practicums provide a glimpse of what teaching is and university coursework provides the theory behind pedagogy and curriculum. As universities consider improvements in teacher preparation programs, reexamination of the “structure and support of the program” should be emphasized rather than the length of the program (Craig, Kraft, & Plessis, 1998). Consequently, it is imperative that teacher educators (university supervisors, mentors, and professional developers) exemplify the qualities, standards, and expectations anticipated for preservice teachers. In reviewing supports of the educator preparation programs or professional development schools (PDS), department leads and hiring committees should reference the credentials experienced teachers, teacher educators, and

professional developers contribute to field. In their research on teacher education, Lewin et al. (2003) discovered:

In some countries, teacher educators/trainers have little or no previous experience working as a teacher or supervising teachers. In addition, they often receive no induction or professional development programmes to ensure the quality of their instruction in the pre-service. These realities influence the quality of the courses in pre-service programmes, but strong support networks and training programmes for teacher educators/trainers themselves can significantly improve the overall quality of pre-service teacher training. (p. xxx)

Their study goes on to suggest that those who teach preservice teachers or provide professional development should be experienced and effective teachers, should teach in authentic classrooms more regularly, and should have strong links to community schools on a regular basis (Lewin et al, 2003). Professors, student teaching supervisors, inservice teachers, and professional developers must be cognizant of today's learning environments.

Another challenge of narrative methods is the interpretation of interview responses into narratives. As I composed the narrative accounts of my participants, I interpreted their experiences and stories. Therefore, it was imperative the composing process was a collaboration between participants' interview responses and researcher (myself). I negotiated the representation of their experience through narration. This collaboration between response and narration shaped the voice represented in the narrative accounts of my participants. Drew (1998) described this perspective:

In the (interactional) circumstances in which we report our own or others' conduct, our descriptions are themselves accountable phenomena through which we recognizably

display an action's (im)propriety, (in)correctness, (un)suitability, (in)appropriateness, (in)justices, (dis)honesty, and so forth. Insofar as descriptions are unavoidably incomplete and selective, they are designed for specific and local interactional purposes. Hence, they may, always and irretrievably, be understood as doing moral work—as providing a basis for evaluating the “rightness” or “wrongness” of whatever is being reported. (p. 295)

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) framed this tension as “relational responsibility” (p. 177).

I recognized the responsibilities of researcher and the importance of representing participants' experiences authentically, purposefully, and with mindfulness that provided perspective and sought potential for the creation of new possibilities in teacher preparation.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was derived from a combination of theories. Figure 3 exhibits the underlying concepts. Being prepared for the classroom involves direct knowledge of curriculum and pedagogical practice. For new teachers, familiarizing and becoming comfortable with Common Core State Standards can be overwhelming. Identifying the ways to get there, or rather “the curriculum,” compounds meeting individual student needs, addressing high stakes testing, and prioritizing district mandates. Maintaining effective pedagogical strategies adds to the environment portion of teaching. Teachers must determine if their lesson plans are best suited for learning centered,

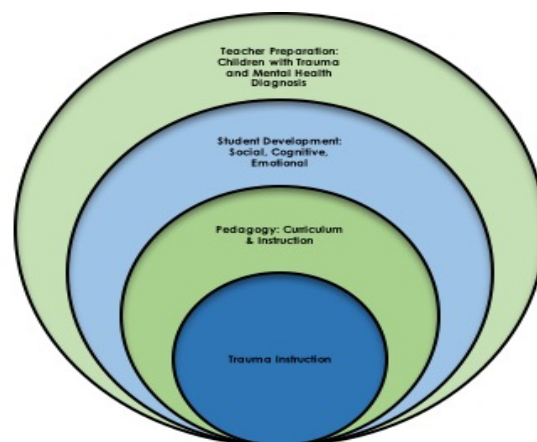


Figure 3: Conceptual framework

learner centered, or teacher centered practice. To facilitate learning centered pedagogy, they must consider the environment, materials, context, and number of students. For learner centered environments, constructivist methods, collaborative opportunities, and active learning practices must be coached, practiced, and facilitated with ease. Teacher centered approaches focus on whole class needs and are often implemented in a lecture format. For any of the previously mentioned characteristics, classroom management and effective planning are essential to a new and veteran teacher's success.

To prepare for working with traumatized or mental health diagnosed students, teachers must understand student development as it relates to social, cognitive, and emotional development. Theories such as Piaget's (1896-1980) cognitive development, Vygotsky's (1896-1934) zone of proximal development, and Bruner's (1915-2016) readiness, solidify understanding of cognitive processes. Self-regulation, motivation, and goal setting are key components of Bandura's (1925-present) social cognitive theory, which supports social understanding. Finally, behaviorism and conditioning as theorized by Skinner's (1904-1990) *operant conditioning*, Thorndike's (1874-1949) *connectionism*, Guthrie's (1886-1959) *habit formation and change*, and Pavlov's (1849-1936) *classical conditioning*, increase understanding of the ways in which students behave in the classroom. Accordingly, educators must make connections between mental health diagnosed and traumatized students and the brain development breakdown in the aforementioned processes.

The creation of this conceptual framework connected the various components one must consider when working with student group. Subsequently, it provided an outline of the theories that refine my proposed study of preservice teachers' perceptions of being prepared to work with students who have experienced trauma.

Research Question

My research was centered around the following questions:

- How do preservice teachers define trauma?
- How do preservice teachers perceive the impact of trauma on student learning in the classroom?
- What is the perception of preservice teachers' preparedness to support and educate students who have experienced trauma?

I wondered what I might learn by inquiring into the relational experiences that intersect teachers' perceptions of being prepared to work with traumatized students (student group) and the realities that met them in the classroom. In what ways did this shape their academic relationships, future success, and overall experience as a preservice educator? How might inquiring into the cohesions and instabilities of teacher's experiences deepen understandings of cultural, institutional, and social narratives that shape our educational landscape today?

Research Design

To understand preservice teachers' perceptions, this study followed a qualitative study using narrative methods. Qualitative research methodology was optimal for this investigation because "qualitative research sought to understand the world from the perspective of those living in it" (Hatch, 2002, p. 7). I wanted to understand the perceptions of preservice teachers by analyzing semi-structured interview responses as narratives of their preparedness in educating traumatized students. The use of the qualitative narrative research methodology informed a deeper understanding of the training and professional development that preservice teachers encountered in their preparations to teach traumatized students (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Using responses from semi-structured interviews allowed me to share narratives of their perceptions,

and narrative inquiry allowed an enriched representation of the lived experiences, or perceptions rather, of preservice teachers (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Finally, narrative methods offered this researcher the opportunity to view educators' experiences from their personal perspectives as they taught those who have lived through trauma (Riessman, 2008).

Participants

To conduct this research, I recruited volunteers (see Appendix B) that met the following criteria: preservice teachers who had completed coursework and applied for educational licensure, 6th-12th grade in the state of Kansas. These criteria were based upon an effort to support rich data collection across secondary preservice teaching experience. To further enrich the data collection, the list of participants was derived from Midwest Universities who had secondary preservice placements in a metropolitan school district (MSD). Current preservice teachers were invited to an in-person, semi-structured interview, followed by a transcript clarification conversation conducted in-person, by phone, or by video conference. Participation in the semi-structured interviews were voluntary (See Appendix C); therefore, no compensation was offered.

Setting

The MSD is the second largest district in Kansas. It is comprised of thirty-five elementary schools (grades K-5), nine middle schools (grades 6-8), and five high schools (grades 9-12). In addition, MSD has multiple secondary alternative education programs to meet the diverse needs of students. The experience of childhood trauma is not limited to any particular population. Therefore, I purposely chose MSD as the focus setting for this research not only because of its recognition in the state, but also because the district offered a wide range of socioeconomic and ethnic diversity across its student population.

The setting of the semi-structured interview took place in the preservice teachers' classrooms. They determined the location and time the interview took place. Interviews were conducted outside of the school day at a mutually agreed upon time. Furthermore, the follow-up interview occurred at the discretion of participants at a mutually agreed upon time and method (phone, video conference, or in-person).

Data Collection

Data collection for the study included digital recorded semi-structured interviews with participants. The significance of semi-structured interviews, as described by Stake (1995), suggested "Qualitative researchers take pride in discovering and portraying multiple views of the case. The interview is the main road to multiple realities" (p. 64). Semi-structured interviews allowed for the preplanning of questions customized for the unique experiences of preservice teachers, allowing for their told stories (Stake, 1995). Furthermore, Merriam (2001) asserted that semi-structured interviews "allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic" (p. 74). This necessary versatility allowed me to respond to each participant authentically, providing emphasis on the chapters of their experience of which they valued the most and chose to explore thoroughly. The following questions were asked during the semi-structured interview:

1. Provide me with a brief explanation of your classroom dynamics, content area, self-efficacy in your classroom and school demographics. Share anything that will help me understand the students with whom you work.
2. How do you define trauma? In what ways have your experiences informed your definition?

3. Regardless of whether your experiences informed your definition, how does your personal experience have an impact on you when faced with this issue with your students?
4. When do you know you have a student in your classroom who has a trauma history?
5. What do you believe about student behaviors in those who have experienced trauma? Describe the behaviors you have witnessed and how they relate to student social, emotional, and cognitive development.
6. Describe an experience you encountered with a student who has experienced trauma. How do you believe you handled the encounter? What coping skills did you employ in this encounter?
7. How do you know when a student's trauma experience has been triggered in the classroom? Explain your experiences with trigger behaviors.
8. Describe your training, or professional development, that explicitly relates to working with and understanding student trauma. In what ways did your teacher training program cover the topic of trauma?
9. Discuss the supports that are available to you. Identify who and/or what they are and the ways in which they have helped or hindered your work in the classroom.
10. In what ways do your mentor teachers support you in understanding student trauma? Tell me about these supports and the ways you have applied this knowledge.
11. What advice do you have for teacher preparation programs or district professional development regarding classroom support in teaching students who have experienced trauma?

I considered follow-up questions as needed based on participants' responses.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted once during the spring of 2018 with preservice teachers and occurred individually in a location specified by participants, which included six classrooms and one teacher workroom. Preservice teachers and the interviewer were the only people present for all interviews, as cooperating teachers left the room or were not present. The semi-structured interview aimed to inquire about their experience working with students who had experienced trauma and their perceptions of feeling prepared to support said students. Interviews were recorded via iPad application TranscribeMe!. After each interview, I sent the digital recording through the TranscribeMe! application for transcription. After I received each transcription from TranscribeMe!, I verified the participants' transcriptions for accuracy. I also transferred the transcription format from the table utilized by TranscribeMe! to a conversation format that encompassed line numbers.

Upon completion of analyzing the transcripts, I followed-up with each participant, via in-person, phone, or video call, by providing a copy of the transcript and elucidating the information as an authentic representation of the semi-structured interview. In addition, time was allotted for additional thoughts in response to the transcript or for clarification of information.

Data Analysis

A series of codes was developed to assist in analyzing the interview responses. A qualitative process of data analysis was initiated using inductive and deductive coding constructs (Miles & Huberman, 1994). An inductive data analysis process identified pertinent themes (See Appendix D), such as preparedness, frustration, school supports, efficacy, and leadership/autonomy, with the data through listening to the digital recorded interviews and reading their corresponding transcripts. A deductive process assisted in creating codes, such as student identity formation, risk-taking behaviors, executive function skills, and social

understanding, from the relevant literature on student trauma as it related to teacher education and training.

Pilot study results

A pilot study was performed during the 2017 spring semester. The study examined elementary teachers' perspectives on their preparedness in working with students who have experienced trauma. The study further surveyed whether years of teaching experience, teaching setting, and amount of trauma training influenced teachers' perceptions.

The data collection for this qualitative study was based on the perspectives of student teacher, cooperating classroom teacher, and student teacher supervisor participants on their teaching context, training, and professional development on trauma informed care, mental health supports, and students with such experiences. An online survey was administered prior to the semi-formal structured interview. It identified participants' definitions of student trauma and mental health, as well as years of experience and training.

Digital recorded semi-structured interviews were conducted in April 2017 with the preservice teacher, her cooperating teacher, and her pre-service teaching supervisor. Interviews inquired about participants' experiences working with students who had experienced trauma and the training they received to work with such students. Prompts that framed these interviews included: Define trauma. What examples of this have you experienced in your classroom? Describe your training or professional development that explicitly relates to working with and understanding trauma?

Several themes emerged within the participants' responses, particularly regarding student behaviors, preparedness, and building-level supports. Experienced teachers and university supervisors shared current student behaviors exhibited in the classroom are not typical of what

they used to be. They expressed higher incidence of family circumstance, health, and substance abuse (by siblings and parents) created a manifestation of emotional outbursts, attachment fears, theft, and self-soothing behaviors such as rocking, thumb sucking, and humming. One university supervisor mentioned that his student teacher observations exposed a myriad of student behaviors with which he was unfamiliar. As a first-year supervisor, he could only compare his observations to his personal classroom experiences. He noted that one semester of student teaching experience supporting students' trauma behaviors is what he experienced in his entire career, signifying an inadequacy in providing support strategies for the preservice teacher.

Cooperating teachers expressed concerns regarding the significant increase in anxiety behaviors over the past two years. Frustration existed in obtaining relevant supports with these students, as there was an administrative expectation to keep dysregulated students in class, thereby disrupting the learning environment. Preservice teachers emphasized the importance of their cooperating teachers and how much they learned from them in supporting student anxiety. As preservice teachers contended, their knowledge and college coursework were not enough preparation for the classroom. They felt frustrated with strategies, such as positive behavior supports (PBS), suggested to support all students, but acknowledged their experiences told them otherwise. As one student teacher shared, "They provide a list of strategies that work with most students, but they fail to teach us what to do when the suggested strategy does not work." Furthermore, they expressed the need for a discipline and strategy class before their student teaching experience. Because of their teaching experience with a well-qualified mentor, they knew how to support students. Without this, they would have failed.

Frustrated by lacking resources, all teachers were concerned about being viewed as inconsistent with classroom discipline. "There is not one strategy that fits all students. I must

decide, on the spot, what works best with the student having difficulty. I might seem wishy-washy, but I have to determine which battle to fight.” The experienced teachers and university supervisor cited the variety of discipline training they received emphasizing not one strategy works for all students. One cooperating teacher stated, “I use everything I have learned in my twenty plus years of teaching, and I figure out which one works best. As a student teacher, I don’t know what I would have done.”

The initial data from the pilot study informed this research. The scope of the study was directed to include only secondary teachers. In addition, questions were refined to delve deeper into preservice teacher knowledge of trauma, trauma behaviors, triggers, and supports.

Conclusion

Qualitative research presented a multitude of methods for learning about the human condition and interacting authentically with research participants. Narrative methods provided the impetus to share stories and reflect on what was, what is, and what could be. Providing authentic opportunities for learning was an important facet of my career as an alternative education teacher and as a university instructor. Narratives constructed the way I planned for and engaged in student learning. For the future of my students, teacher preparedness was the center of this work. Learning about their perceptions will enhance the future ways we prepare and develop classroom teachers.

Chapter Four: Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore what today's preservice teachers really understood about educating students who have experienced trauma and their perceptions of being prepared to support such students. The research questions addressed in this study are:

- How do preservice teachers define trauma?
- How do preservice teachers perceive the impact of trauma on student learning in the classroom?
- What is the perception of preservice teachers' preparedness to support and educate students who have experienced trauma?

This chapter begins with an introduction to participants and their preservice teaching classroom dynamics. The subsequent sections detail preservice teachers' definitions of trauma and how personal experiences may or may not have shaped their construct, their impressions of the ways in which trauma impacts student learning, and their perceptions of preparedness in supporting and educating traumatized students. This is followed by advice from preservice teachers to university teacher preparation programs and to district staff development regarding how both can better support preservice teachers as they maneuver the depth and breadth of current student populations. When possible, the reported findings are in the participants' words, to authentically portray their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Participant feedback should not be regarded as objective reality, an approach with which the format of this study rejects as inherently uncertain (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), but rather as genuine depictions of reality as they perceive it. This perception might be strikingly differently from other professionals such as in-service teachers, administrators, mental health professionals, and teacher preparation programs.

Introduction of participants and classroom dynamics

Nigel is the first of the seven participants who volunteered to take part in the semi-structured interview for this research study. The interview took place in his classroom, where we were the only two present. We were interrupted, once, by a student who was looking for Nigel's mentor teacher. Nigel revealed that he had prior teaching overseas, where he taught English. He was completing an alternative teaching certification program in English to supplement his previous degree. His preservice teaching content was Freshman English, and he hoped to secure a job for the fall 2018 school year.

Dash taught math to high school Seniors. Since his room was being used by another teacher, we conducted the semi-structured interview in a conveniently located teacher work room. There were no interruptions and the interview seemed comfortable. Dash shared that he came from a family of teachers, and it was his desire to eventually move to Colorado and secure a teaching position there. He did secure a job locally for the 2018-2019 school year.

Joy had previous experience with another school district, where she worked as a paraeducator, prior to her preservice teaching experience. In her preservice teaching, she taught social studies to high school freshman and juniors and considered her role as a preservice teacher second to her role as parent of a child who also attended school at MSD. This fact seemed to inform many of her responses during the interview. The semi-structured interview took place in her classroom, during her break. Her mentor teacher was present at the beginning of the interview, but he left to do work in another location, allowing Joy to speak freely. He encouraged Joy to participate in this research, as he told her it was an important facet of her work. Joy secured a position with MSD at the end of her preservice teaching.

Woody's preservice teaching experience was in the content of orchestra and band. He was the only participant who taught at both the middle and high school levels, so his responses considered both adolescent populations. Woody moved to this area from a smaller Midwestern college. He shared that his assigned schools had an increase in adolescent suicide, so there has been increased professional development on that topic. He felt he could relate to this subject, as his father had recently passed. The interview took place at his middle school assignment in the band room. We were the only people present in the semi-structured interview. Woody secured a job in MSD for the 2018-2019 school year.

Riley taught sixth grade math for her preservice teaching experience. The interview was conducted in her classroom, and her mentor teacher was present for the first fifteen minutes. Although her cooperating teacher was present, she only listened and never shared any information. Riley hoped to be hired by MSD; unfortunately, they took too long in the hiring process, and she was offered a position with another local district in the interim. Riley shared concise and explicit responses in the interview.

Bruce came to teaching as a second career. His original degree was in economics. He was pursuing a master's degree in curriculum and instruction, and obtaining his degree through an alternative route. Bruce taught high school math to sophomores and juniors. The interview took place in his classroom, where we were the only people present. Bruce was knowledgeable in courageous conversations and multi-cultural education. At the time of the interview, he had applied for jobs, but had not yet been hired.

Eve was the seventh participant for this study. She taught high school advanced placement English. The interview took place in her classroom, and her cooperating teacher left the room so she could share freely. Her preservice teaching experience was being done in

fulfillment of an alternative route to teaching, as Eve had obtained a bachelor degree in another content area. Eve was very familiar with MSD, because she had been raised in the area and had graduated from MSD. She shared early in the interview that she had specific interest in the topic of student trauma. She also revealed that she lost her father a few years previous, and it continued to impact her interactions with students. It was her goal to obtain a position with MSD, which she did at the end of the school year.

All participants attended certified teaching programs from a variety of Midwest universities. In addition, all participants taught four to five sections a day with class sizes ranging from nineteen to twenty-six students.

As participants explained the demographics of their schools, they all believed their populations consisted of middle to upper class students. Four preservice teachers described course sections in which students, who participated in the general education setting, qualified for special education (SPED) or English as a second language (ESL) services, or who had a 504 plan (a plan for educational accommodations). In terms of diversity, participants stated that the populations were particularly diverse, yet most students were white. Woody reflected on his personal beliefs regarding diversity, citing he expected that students who lived in the same neighborhood or who attended the same school throughout most of their lives would have similar traits. He also noted the international students with whom he taught were more extroverted than what he had experienced with international students in college: “they were normally very quiet, you know?” This seemed to challenge his personal bias about international students and their operandi in the classroom setting.

Participants similarly described classroom environment as an important factor in student teaching success. Dash shared the biggest dynamic he looks for in his classroom is comfort. “If

they don't feel comfortable, then they will not want to learn and that comes from respect: for me, from me, for each other, and for classroom discussions. His focus was on environment and relationships.

For three of the participants, behavior was not a problem. Likewise, they shared that they had not witnessed fights, bullying, promiscuity, or outbursts in the classroom. Joy conveyed she had to learn to pick her battles, which helped her prioritize when to seek assistance from the administrator. She found this extremely important, as she has learned students are cognizant of the way she handles the day-to-day management of her classroom.

Definition of trauma

The American Psychological Association (APA) defines trauma as,

. . . an emotional response to a terrible event like an accident, rape, or natural disaster. Immediately after the event, shock and denial are typical. Longer term reactions include unpredictable emotions, flashbacks, strained relationships and even physical symptoms like headaches or nausea. While these feelings are normal, some people have difficulty moving on with their lives. ("Trauma," n.d.)

The prevalent increase in childhood trauma is witnessed daily by today's teachers and can result in counterproductive learning environments for all students. Incidentally, trauma has no restriction with respect to race, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, gender, or ethnicity, which only adds to the complexities of the learning environment in schools. The pervasiveness of trauma in children has prompted The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to create a working definition of trauma. SAMHSA establishes individual trauma as resulting from "an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life

threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being" ("Trauma and Violence," 2018).

Preservice teachers define trauma. Both definitions coincide with participants' responses when they were asked to define trauma. Nigel defined trauma as stresses or experiences of some kind which produces an eventual need down the road. He went on to suggest that this kind of experience requires teachers to differentiate instruction for the student. Dash expanded Nigel's definition by stating trauma is "an event or an action that negatively impacts a person in the long run for the future." He identified trauma as physical, vocal, abusive, drug, and death, and finally recognized that he always associates trauma "with bad."

Joy realized that her definition was colloquial because she never really thought about it. After some reflection, she determined "trauma is just the kind of thing that has such an impact, you can't just leave it behind." She identified whether trauma was emotional, physical, or a rough time, "It's always sort of there in the back of your mind or in your reactions." She felt as though you cannot just forget about it, walk away from it, or get over it.

Woody shared the definition held by Dash. He defined trauma as "anything that leaves a negative residual impact on daily life for any given amount of time." Recognizing that trauma is "something that is significantly impacting the student in more than one place of their life," Riley shared "it is likely they can't just put it [trauma] to the side." She mentioned multiple examples: home life, relationships, and school, citing that some kids have multiple experiences going on that can be daunting in nature.

The idea of living normally was shared by Bruce as he defined trauma as anything that impacts a student's typical life, or anything that adversely impacts their ability to kind of live "normally." He cited death in the family as a strong example, sharing that this kind of experience

will “obviously impact their performance in the classroom for several reasons.” He went on to identify other traumas a student might face, such as addiction of family member or self and injury.

Eve shared that physical trauma was at the forefront of her mind as she created her definition. She connected her own car accident experience with her definition as she stated, “It happens when you have an accident, [and] some sort of issue with their body afterwards like healing--maybe even being handicapped--so a specific physical trauma.” She extended her definition to include “mental trauma, trauma occurring emotionally from a hardship in the past from losing a parent. It could potentially cause hardship or sadness . . .”

The similarity in participant’s responses is the narrative that trauma has an impact for any given time on students’ lives. In addition, trauma is associated with students as negative. Participants were able to identify many of the adverse childhood experiences (ACES) that impact adult lives. They include: physical abuse, vocal abuse, relationship problems, drug abuse, death, emotional abuse, a rough time, family addiction, car accident, physical impairment caused from accident/trauma.

Personal experiences shape definition. When participants were asked about the ways in which their experiences defined their definition, many began their response by suggesting they did not have personal experiences with trauma. In fact, Nigel questioned whether he had a personal trauma experience. However, as participants began to rationalize experiences that informed their definition, many chronicle childhood experiences described by researchers. Dash responded, “I haven’t personally gone through a lot of trauma.” He shared that he grew up in an affluent area, that his parents got divorced, and that his cat got hit by a car when he was younger. He recognized that growing up in an affluent area does not mean one is not affected by trauma;

however, Dash suggested the possible misunderstanding that trauma dramatically affects less affluent communities.

Two specifically discussed the death of a parent and accidents that resulted in injury. These participants correlated their personal experiences with the ways they interacted with and supported students in the classroom. Woody shared that his father had passed two months before this interview. He felt as if it was not trauma for him because, “I was good with my dad; he was in a good place and it [his death] was quick.” In addition, he discussed his personal physical trauma of seven knee surgeries resulting from being pinned under a tractor. “At the time, it wasn’t trauma for me because I wasn’t smart enough to realize what it was.” Woody also reflected on his personal resilience, which Ungar (2012) defines “as a set of behaviors over time that reflect the interactions between individuals and their environments, in particular the opportunities for personal growth that are available and accessible” (p. 14). As resilience relates to students who may have experienced trauma, Woody suggested the disposition of a person really influences how they react to trauma, and the positive or negative behaviors that occur as a result are based solely on the person.

Eve began her reflection, “In terms of emotional trauma, I think something that has helped me a lot [with students] was the death of my dad a few years ago.” She felt as if this event was not as traumatic given her age at the time (twenty years old) and her familial support. It was a sudden death, leaving her with the assumption that she needed to take care of everyone and to support her mother, who was not financially stable at the time. She recognized this experience, “threw a lot of emotional hardships during that time,” despite the passing of four years. As she discussed the experience, emotion overwhelmed her, which led to this musing:

I can use this experience to relate to students who have had death in the family or lost a parent and things like that. I feel like it shaped me to be a stronger person, in a sense.

Sometimes I just take things a little easier--not everything is a life or death situation in school or a bad time with a student. I realize that on the next day it will, hopefully, be better. It has made me a little harder in the sense, where things do not really bother me as much as they would have.

Eve's experience transfers to the classroom in that it may be the only safe, stable, and consistent environment available for traumatized students.

Three participants mentioned they did not have personal traumas; however, they were able to identify how their classroom teaching experiences helped them increase their understanding of what they believed to be trauma and to improve their support of students in the classroom. Although Joy did not feel as if she had experienced personal trauma herself, she was able to contrast her current teaching environment with a previous environment, in which she described as a more affluent school, with a different demographic, and less diversity. Her acknowledgement of the differences in her current placement helped her to reframe her thinking on trauma.

Once I came here, I was realizing students with active cases going on for custody or foster systems where they are put in their fourth home in high school. I used to think trauma was like a bad thing that happened to you, but a lot of home life stuff has entered my radar that I never had thought of before.

She identified that trauma could be passive in nature, so if something was happening at home that directly affected a family member, it indirectly affected the student.

“I think as a student, I didn’t even realize that some of my peers may have been going through [trauma],” surmised Riley. She did not feel as though she had a response to the question, but she mirrored the idea that as a teacher “you see so many things that you know students are dealing with and their peers probably have no idea.” She went on to suggest that even though students may be going through something at home, the expectation for them to “put it away” when they come to school is difficult. They might be able to put it aside, but the experience still affects them. She acknowledged students may not consistently exhibit behaviors suggesting their personal traumas affect them at school; however, there are times when their behaviors suggest school is not their priority.

Bruce expressed that he had not personally had experiences with injury or addiction, as that is what he thinks of when he defines trauma. He described his experiences as limited, based on what he has seen. He shared that he grew up in a small town, so it appeared that everyone knew everyone’s business. “You kind of get a feel for whose family is struggling.” In terms of teaching, his definition was moderately formed by a recent experience he had with a student who was in foster care. This student was being placed with another family. “Her last day was just very sad. She was like, oh, I’m not going to be here anymore. I was not prepared for that. It kind of hurt.” This exemplified the preparedness one might feel, specifically preservice teachers, as they extricate their personal emotion from that of their students.

Impact of personal experience on supporting traumatized students. When participants were asked how their experiences had an impact when supporting students who may have experienced trauma, the theme of empathy emerged. Many participants responded in a way that suggested their need to rethink academic versus emotional priorities. Nigel responded with a clear focus on differentiation. He expressed the idea that getting to know students “informs our

instruction.” Nigel believed today’s teachers need to be sensitive to the current issues students face. He presented gun violence as an example of an important, present-day concern and suggested “schools should not run live drills because of those who have been affected.”

For Dash, empathy and interest were key factors of impact. “It mostly comes into hearing other people’s traumas . . . and then trying to kind of put myself in their shoes and being able to see it through their eyes.” He considered what he would need, want, and be open to accepting, if he had experiences similar to his students, exemplifying empathy in its greatest element. He also reflected that students often lack the skills to handle trauma, so being a teacher who provided the best support and strategies was “crucial in their success, not just in school, but also in life.” He went on to say: “Trauma goes so far beyond the classroom that as much as we can do here [school], it’s always going to be better for them in the long run.”

Referencing counselors as pillars of student information, Joy reviewed several ways in which her student teaching experience changed her thinking. “It’s made me more aware of the tone I take, especially since I have fairly good report with my students, but I just have to be more aware of what I know might be going on with them.” She highlighted her mindset change from why do students always want to leave my class to students who are advocating for their well-being, so allowing them to leave my class for the counselor is supporting their current emotional needs. Joy realized students are recognizing their own issues and are trying to deal with it in a productive way. She deepened her understanding that getting an A is less important than ensuring students get through the day feeling safe and supported.

“I try to be the most empathetic person in the room, because every student is going to feel an impact differently,” reported Woody. He recalled the various friends he had through school who struggled with depression and other adverse experiences and how those experiences affected

them. When working with students, he indicated, “I am very much so a problem solver, but I have just got to go at their [students] pace. I try to be as openly supportive as possible.” He implied that he had all the time in the world for students to process through whatever is happening in their world. By listening to students, Woody emphasized he did not want to make anything worse, as he is not a counselor; therefore, he treated each situation with sensitivity and confidentiality, being as empathetic and as genuine as possible. “You have to be genuine, because they can sense that instantly.”

When it comes to addressing equality in treating students fairly, Riley contended, “I think it is hard, in a sense, that you want equality for your students. You want to treat every student not like fair in the sense they get the same thing, but fair in the sense that they are getting what they need.” She expressed this in terms of her content area math. She is cognizant that math may not be student’s top priority, especially if they are thinking about adversities, such as whether they are going to have dinner or poor relationships going on at home. “Just worrying about that makes it difficult sometimes because we want math to be at the forefront of their priority list, when in reality, it’s not.”

In all the responses, Bruce referred to his lack of experience trauma history. He directly related his response to his current student teaching experience. “I think with a lot of things in teaching, experience is so important, where when I don’t have that experience or I haven’t seen that situation, I don’t know how to deal with it.” Bruce alluded to the interaction with the student who was moving. Although the student was happy about being placed in a better home, he was taken back and felt sad about her leaving. He also discussed a student whose parent had passed away. The student literally drove the parent to the hospital, the parent died, and the student came to school the next day, noting this was a new experience for him.

Although I have not had a lot of direct conversations about those incidents, I have gotten opportunities to kind of see how students act, see how students carry themselves, and when it is appropriate for me to step in and say something, or offer assistance in some way, depending on the situation.

He stipulated that not all situations are the same, but sensed that, as an instructor, there are common strategies in the way one approaches any situation.

This was apparent in Eve's meaningful reflection as she responded to the question. She specifically discussed a female student whom she sensed did not respect her as a teacher. Eve considered what was going on with the student, trying to discern why she displayed certain behaviors with her versus the behaviors she displayed with her male coworker. "I am trying to understand how students act in the classroom. I try to take the more academic approach and dissect why the student acts like this. I know it is not because of me, because I just came in here a few weeks ago." Eve felt the hardest day in this class was nothing compared to surviving the death of her father; implying she understood students' dispositions' affect academic and classroom behavior.

Eve went on to discuss her former role in MSD as a student. She was mindful of her assumptions that students in an affluent school lack the traumas and disadvantages that less affluent students may experience. "As naive as it sounds, it took me back a bit. At least a couple of students have parents who are in jail or on drugs, and others whose families are apart because of mental illness or things like that." She then admitted to being more conscientious of students who may act out because they do not have the same advantages in their home life as Eve had. She surmised having a better understanding of [students'] home lives and realized that everyone was different, which increased her capacity to support traumatized students.

Preservice teachers perceive the impact of trauma on student learning in the classroom

Knowledge of student trauma history. Although several of the participants indicated they had little to no experience in supporting students who had experienced trauma, most were able to readily identify their awareness of students who might have a trauma history. The shared concern, however, was regarding the appropriateness of asking a student if he or she is experiencing some sort of trauma.

Nigel's response indicated that he utilized resources, such as Individual Education Plans (IEP) or 504 plans, from student files, yet he has never seen a tag for trauma. He asserted, "I am informed by my empathy for student experience and desire to build relationships with students and towards that goal, remove effective barriers." Nigel believed trauma is an effective barrier that can be minimized and possibly removed through differentiated instruction.

Like Nigel, Dash indicated IEPs and 504 plans are just one way to gain information regarding student trauma. Dash also cited his cooperating teacher, other teachers, and building administrators as important resources in gaining student information. From a preservice teacher view, Dash emphasized, "Visually you can see a student's body language as they come into the class." He contended tracking daily attendance and assignment completion alerted him to students who were possibly experiencing adversity in their lives. Dash questioned the appropriateness of directly asking a student, signaling a possible lack in confidence of addressing student concerns.

Bruce shared similar concerns. "For me, it is recognizing those situations, but then that next step of knowing when it is appropriate to ask or what the next appropriate step is" presented conflict in his preparedness to support students who may be experiencing trauma. Bruce felt that it was easy to track kids in terms of attendance and assignment completion. He also shared that

his cooperating teacher, administrator, and other teachers shared information about students. For Bruce, an important component of identifying student trauma is gathering information shared by parents; however, he recognized the reality that not all parents broadcast such pertinent information. He utilized a student's classroom behavior, specifically as it related to being social or reserved during class discussion, as a tool to recognize if something is amiss with a student. Bruce mused the idea that he consistently related trauma with death, but as he became more informed throughout his preservice teaching experience, he affirmed that students may not share information such as a lack of food in the home or a neglectful parent, who has not been seen by school personnel for several days.

Woody's response focused more on student behavior in the classroom. He listed the following behaviors as key indicators that the student may be experiencing something unusual: isolated from the group, quieted when usually outspoken, reserved or no eye contact, shrunken body (wants to be ignored), or flighty. He substantiated his response with a personal experience, "I have also encountered people that absolutely just don't care. They are just bombastic and you know they live their life how they want to because they have had some really crappy experiences." Woody questioned whether the behavior indicated trauma, but he surmised that youth reacted to experiences in different ways and at different times in their life.

"Because I really do not have experience with it, aside from just being told, I do not really know what to look for as the warning signs in the problem aside from all the stuff that we were taught--if there are bruises, if they seem withdrawn--you know, the stereotypical," explained Joy. She stressed that she has an advantage of knowing student information, because she was made aware of her students' histories. Joy's conflict was expressed as she observed, on most days, the students who experienced some type of trauma do not show stereotypical signs.

She voiced, “It has kind of made me question how well I think I know the trauma-based stuff, because it is not covered in undergrad very much.” This response was again signaling a lack of confidence in supporting or understanding student trauma.

“I think-I mean I know it is reported,” explained Riley, who also shared that IEPs and parents are good sources of information. Riley shared an example of a student who lacked motivation and did not complete homework. “He just does not do anything and so I think building that relationship and seeing what is going on” is vital to determining if there should be a concern. Once Riley could establish a relationship with students, she was able to approach them with, “this is not your normal behavior. What is going on?” In her response, Riley never seemed to question whether or when it was appropriate to ask a student what obstacles they might be facing, as opposed to Nigel, Bruce, and Dash.

Eve’s response mirrored that of other participants. She stressed what students present on the surface, behaviors such as sitting hunched in their desks, looking down, not making eye contact, unwashed clothes, and poor hygiene, as indicators of trauma. These behaviors caused her to think, “Hey, something is probably going on at home.”

Beliefs regarding traumatized student behaviors. Purposeful management of the classroom learning environment requires that teachers employ a variety of positive intervention strategies for managing student behaviors. Positive intervention responses have been shown to improve student behavior, emotional well-being, and academics. Regrettably, minimal training exists for preservice teachers in positive response strategies when student behaviors become problematic. In addition, reactive responses to troublesome behavior, especially to students who have experienced trauma, might illicit unintended negative side effects.

When participants were asked about their personal beliefs regarding the behaviors of students who had experienced trauma, most responded by stating a quality of being sensitive and adjusting behaviors based on the need of the students. Nigel reaffirmed this in his response, suggesting that he is sensitive to these experiences. “I just try to be as sensitive as possible without being invasive. It’s better to be cautious than to overstep something.” He also prioritized the importance of gaining this information from administration, emphasizing he will be sensitive with the student. Otherwise, his sense was that he would have to rely on the student for the information, something for which he will not pry.

Dash felt that normalizing the student’s day was most important. When confronted with adverse behaviors from students who have experienced trauma, he emphasized, “There is nothing more that I want than to make them feel comfortable and wanted in the classroom. I value their opinions and their thoughts.” He felt as if he would address the student in private to ask if everything was okay or if he or she needed to talk. He stressed the importance of not singling them out in front of the class.

Woody referenced the spectrum of behaviors a traumatized student might express in the classroom. He listed students who were reclusive versus the students who were high energy and attention seeking. Riley expressed a similar response, stating, “I think it is different for every student. It really just depends on the student.” She described an example of a female student in her class who had a very difficult home life and liked being outgoing, funny, and loud in class. “She’s funny and she wants people to see her in that light. It’s the way for her to brush it [trauma] aside.”

Witnessed behaviors and relationship to student social, emotional, and cognitive development. When asked to describe behaviors and their relationship to student social,

emotional, and cognitive development, Joy, Woody, and Bruce did not have specific descriptions to share. Nigel acknowledged that he could be sensitive to student outward behaviors that are manifested without really knowing what caused them. He explained, “Internal triggers are harder to know, like a student who is shy. If trauma caused that, I wouldn’t necessarily know what that was.” He could not name specific experiences or how they related to student social, emotional, and cognitive development.

Conversely, Dash described a female student who was “just kind of sad. She shut down.” He went on to suggest, “developmentally, they aren’t thinking about their environment, and socially, they aren’t interacting as much--they are more introverted.” He believed students distance themselves from their work and lacked classroom participation.

Riley described a student whose mother was an alcoholic. His mother had been working toward sobriety, so she was earning visits with her son [student]. Right before spring break, the student was to begin overnight visits, about which Riley shared the student was very excited. However, the mother never showed on the day before spring break when she was supposed to pick him up. Prior to this event, the student had positive interactions in the classroom, despite missing his mother. When he returned to school, Riley immediately noticed a change in his behavior, but nothing that was disruptive. She noted, “This definitely affected him. Just because he does not live with her, he was still worried about her.” What resonated with her was that as a teacher when she really understood what was happening with this student, she felt, “I don’t think I could do any different in his situation, so I just hope he is doing the best he can.” She recognized that school was not his priority, as he had so many other things to worry about, mentioning, “I see that with a lot of kids.”

Eve focused her response on a student with poor hygiene. She noticed an immediate change in his appearance and assumed he was having hardships at home. “He wasn’t showering; he had greasy hair and wore the same clothes several days in a row.” In addition, she reported his struggles with work completion and turning in assignments in a timely manner. She adjusted the number of assignments copied, giving her extras to assist in meeting his needs. She stated, “At first, I found that I didn’t quite understand . . . so I found it a little annoying. I kept asking, why are you losing everything?” She went on to say, “But then I started picking up all those cues . . . he’s wearing the same shirt three days in a row and he doesn’t look super clean.” She realized a need for more understanding on her part. Because of what is going on in his personal life, she noted that, “He’s just a little more unfocused in the classroom and outside of the classroom because he doesn’t complete homework.”

Descriptions of encountering students who have experienced trauma. When students exhibit anti-prosocial or aggressive behaviors in the classroom, even the most experienced teachers have difficulties in maintaining positive classroom management. For preservice teachers, problematic behaviors can lead to feelings of inadequacies, particularly when they are unprepared for such experiences. As indicated in participant responses, these secondary preservice teachers expressed a variety of ways with which they understood behaviors presented by students who have experienced trauma.

When participants were asked to describe an encounter with a student who has experienced trauma, once again, Nigel questioned whether he witnessed such an experience. Alternatively, the six remaining participants could describe such experiences. Dash discussed a female student who had taken a phone call during class. When she returned, she was crying. Her face was red and she put her head down to hide her emotions. When asked how he believed he

handled the situation, he noted that he realized she was not going to be doing any more on that day. In fact, she left class quickly, so he felt it was best to let her do her own thing. The next day, Dash navigated the situation, recognizing the student still looked “kind of down.” His coping skill was to be fully present for the student. He shared, “I told her, ‘anything you need, just let me know. I mean I am not just your math teacher. If you just want to talk about anything, let me know because I have been through a lot, so I am open. I am here for you.’”

Joy encountered a more complex situation. She discussed a difficult parent teacher conference in which a student, who was in foster care, had his biological parents as well as his foster mom and guardian ad litem (case worker) present. She identified the difficulty for this student as emotionally conflicted because his biological parents were having custody disputes not only over him, but also his siblings, in addition to the conflict his biological mother was having with his foster mother. She stated, “Conferences, which are supposed to be a time for us to sit down and touch base, became this huge, stressful, and terrible situation for the student.” She indicated there was fallout for days thereafter, as the student repeatedly asked to go to the counselor.

Nonetheless, Joy was astonished by the movement from the student asking to go to the counselor to the student asking to stay with her during lunch. She disclosed, “I was a little concerned, because I’m a student teacher and I don’t have a history with these kids. I asked my coordinating teacher how much I could talk about with them. What do I do? He replied, ‘Just be human.’” Joy concluded, “I did what I felt like I would have wanted somebody else to do in that situation. I just sort of let him get it off his chest, and I empathized about general things.” She reiterated the enormity of having that level of trust with a student, especially after feeling

discomfort at the conference. All the same, she felt relieved that this student had many people on which to rely for support.

She employed empathy skills as she interacted with the student. Joy stressed that when the student provided specifics about his emotions or what was happening at home, she listened, rather than provide statements such as, “I cannot even imagine,” or “if I was in your shoes, I would . . .” because that is not why the student entrusted her. She highlighted her discomfort and concern for the student after their conversation and sought assistance from the student’s school counselor.

Woody expressed that he could not make assumptions about whether a student had experienced trauma, because he felt he had not gotten close enough to any student to verify this information. He shared his assumption about a student in his class who seems very skittish, shy, and reclusive. He sensed that she was very insecure, and he shared that she often played her instrument with her hood up. In handling the encounter, Woody explained, “I wonder why, but I do not want to pry. It can cause public embarrassment, etcetera.”

Riley characterized a student who was aggressive in class, because he was bullied by his brother. She reported that his brother had since been removed from the home, which caused worry and sadness for her student. Riley indicated that the student suffered from other concerns as well; however, his aggressiveness and disrespect of peers disrupted the classroom environment. Riley chronicled the ways in which she supported math students, prior to the start of the school day. This student came in most mornings at 7:30 a.m. for additional math support. Nonetheless, she mentioned he was acting up during his regularly scheduled math class, which in turn earned him a detention. She recounted, “When he came in and got his detention slip, he instantly started crying. He did not realize this was a detention and thought he was just coming in

as normal. She explained that his class behavior was disrespectful.” Riley believed when coping with these situations, it was important to name inappropriate student behavior. She cited, “I know the student was not doing it to be mean to me. I do not believe that. I explain this to them, and I try to help them understand that this is not about sixth grade math. Rather it is about their habit formation. It is the bigger picture.” Including parents in the conversation is also a strategy utilized by Riley.

Suicide is an epidemic occurring in many of the high schools in MSD, so when Bruce discussed the female student in his class whose brother recently ended his life, he stressed the importance of creating a safe and accepting classroom environment. He explained, “I am a very relaxed teacher. I think my classroom is very open and talkative, so I try to engage students in classroom discussions as much as possible.” As Bruce discussed this student, he expressed that he had never directly spoken to her about the suicide; however, his cooperating teacher had. The student knew that Bruce was aware of her situation. In fact, Bruce met her parents during conferences, a time in which they shared their personal experience and what the school [Bruce] could expect from their daughter in terms of behavior.

Bruce described this student as having close friends in class; consequently, they were often talkative and engaged in the lesson. Even so, there were days when this student arrived late and appeared to be more checked out than other days. He assumed, “I hate to say you can just tell from looking at her face, but I can tell that [on those days] she’s sad or something happened to make her think about it.” From what was shared at conferences, Bruce believed that she had a counselor, which may be the reason she came late.

When reflecting on how he handled her late-day encounters, Bruce surmised, on the days when he realized he is not going to get the expected student engagement, he had to determine

when it is appropriate to push her. He recognized that students are often quiet when thinking how to answer or respond during a class discussion, but with this student, he sensed putting her on the spot might not be the best approach. “I never want to make a student feel uncomfortable in class. This might be an opportunity where I check in. I think it is appropriate to make myself available in a situation like this and show the student that, hey, I am here if you have any questions.” He expressed how his cooperating teacher placed this student on his radar, but he felt there might be others for whom he does not know the entire story, so when their behavior is uncharacteristically different, it is challenging to know an appropriate response.

Bruce continued his analysis of employed coping skills admitting that he, “one hundred percent,” does not know how to approach most situations. He articulated that he wanted to be supportive and to be able to approach all situations responsibly. All the same, he did not have the training nor the expertise to be all knowing in supporting students who have experienced trauma, citing, “There are other professionals for that exact situation.” He reiterated his insecurity in taking the responsible next steps, “I would say, yeah, I do not have that experience, yet.”

Eve recounted an experience with a young lady in her class who wore oversized, dark clothing and had poor hygiene. Eve’s intuition caused her to assume that emotionally, this girl had more of a tough personality. She rarely listened to lessons, as she often wore her headphones during class. “I do not know if it is because I am the new student teacher in the room or if it is because I am female.”

Eve shared that she felt it was important to gain a better understanding of this student, so she spent some time reviewing her personal file to see what she could learn. She discovered that her student did not have a strong female role model in her life, as her mother was not in the picture. Eve realized that the student’s behavior was not personally against her, but rather a

feeling of mistrust of any female in an authority role. The student responded differently to her male cooperating teacher.

In supporting this student, Eve worked to build a relationship. “She is a very smart girl, who struggles with turning in homework. I realized she did not have a computer at home.” Eve tried to be more understanding and provided the student extra time to complete homework at the computer lab. Eve believed this worked to her advantage, as their student-teacher relationship improved over the course of her teaching experience.

Classroom triggers on student trauma experiences. In the classroom environment, it occurs that students sometimes exhibit dysregulated behavior that seems to stem from nowhere. Teachers often find themselves blindsided as they work to understand why the behavior occurred. Skinner identified this behavior as stimulus control, which posits a distinct behavioral reaction is exacerbated only in the occurrence of specific stimuli (Skinner, 1974). Therefore, the learning environment in which students participate increases the likelihood of triggered behaviors to occur in the classroom.

When asked how do you know when a student’s trauma has been triggered in the classroom, Nigel responded that it is not possible to know everything about students. He went on to share that if they were reading a story in class, such as *Romeo and Juliet*, and there was a student who had suicidal ideation, he might offer the student a different class project on which to work. Dash empathized with students, recognizing many of his students are currently experiencing difficulties. “There are students who are starving and students who are homeless. That is something I cannot relate to.”

Joy’s frank response indicated that she had no idea unless a student said something. “I can watch out for what I know of.” She cited prior knowledge of a student’s trauma experience

signaled her to adjust lessons, address difficult topics, and offer other learning opportunities. Joy also expressed concern the information provided to her is so vague, that it is hard to be proactive without really pressing students with, “Tell me your exact triggers. Tell me what I need to avoid.” In asking students such questions, Joy admitted, “I feel like [asking] is just going to set off some sort of reaction in the first place to make them think that I do not want to help.” This response was indicative of the previous concerns about when it is appropriate to directly ask students about their needs.

Woody identified an instant change of behavior as symbolic of triggering a youth’s trauma. He went on to describe a young woman in his orchestra class, who portrayed introverted behaviors. He recalled her thinking too deeply about things outside of class, stating, “She was not in the moment with the rest of us.” Woody expressed his uncertainty by identifying that he was not a counselor, so it was difficult to determine if the young student had been triggered in his classroom.

Riley and Bruce had not had such an experience, at least as far as they knew. However, Eve, was more reflective on her response. Over time, Eve learned, specifically with two of her female students, when she utilized an authoritative voice, she tended to get a negative response. She noted this type of trigger as “subtler.” In her preservice teaching experience, Eve stated that she worked on more positive ways to vocalize with students. Regarding what she considered an emotional outburst as a triggered behavior, she could not recall any experiences.

Perception of preservice teachers’ preparedness to support and educate students who have experienced trauma

Preservice teachers may leave teacher preparation programs with coursework in special education and human development, but to the extent of which those courses cover trauma and its

impact on academic and socio-emotional learning is unknown. The omittance of this information from teacher preparation programs leaves teacher candidates with a sense of unpreparedness as they transform their learning into classroom application.

Training and or professional development pertaining to understanding student trauma. Participants described little to no training or professional development as it relates to supporting students, who have experienced trauma, in the classroom. The responses included abnormal psychology, special education, multicultural education, and differentiation courses as possible courses where this information could have been corroborated; however, this was not the case.

Nigel described attending a course on differentiation, but trauma training was nonexistent, even though the course covered topics such as language differentiation and physical disability.

Dash cited his course on school law as a place where trauma was discussed. However, the training in that course was about trauma occurring in schools (i.e. school shootings) and the legal implications of the best ways for educators to handle such experiences. In further reflection, Dash revealed that his teacher training provided no experience in scenarios from which preservice teachers could brainstorm the various ways to support traumatized students.

Joy communicated a different experience, disclosing specific conversations about trauma. She mentioned suicide (by calling it when a student dies suddenly) and preceded to discuss her personal experience with a high school friend who had taken his life. Joy related this specifically to the increase in student suicide not only in her school, but also in the MSD. She also cited active shooter training as something all educators must attend, and the way in which this experience is traumatic for students. As Joy recited her professional development training, she

felt conflicted over the adequacy of training teachers receive. “It is great they focus on the specifics as a district and as a community, but the specifics do not really fit into the broader scheme for educators.” When asked to clarify her statement, Joy mentioned that a trauma team does not exist in her school. She felt this was an important component of trauma support for students and teachers alike. She described her coursework on trauma as inefficient. She took a special education course on the exceptional child, in which the topic was covered briefly; however, “not everybody who has trauma is going to be in SPED services, so that does not really apply.” Joy expressed that her general education courses did not discuss student trauma.

Woody attended college in a location that also had a mental health hospital with strong community presence. He took an abnormal psychology course, which was a program requirement. The course offered review and discussion on different case studies and mental health diagnosis. Woody expressed surprise with his program when “We didn’t go out and see it [mental health hospital]. We could have witnessed a real person with these diagnoses,” rather than a fictitious case scenario. In further discussion of his teacher education program, he named a human growth and development course that discussed trauma, for a few days.

Information shared by a professor about what one should do during certain situations does not necessarily exemplify what every educator would do. This was the concern expressed by Riley. Although they discussed case scenarios in her college courses, she felt as if she might not handle some of the situations in the same way. Riley noted that being aware of students should always be the priority, and with this knowledge, educators can have a better idea of how to respond to individual student needs.

Referring to his undergraduate degree in math and economics, Bruce considered he had not had four years of traditional teacher preparation courses. In his graduate work, he cited

multicultural education and special education as two courses where he might have learned a little more about student trauma. However, his special education (SPED) course was a survey of SPED diagnosis and characteristics of which educators might identify in students. Bruce identified his multicultural education course as the catalyst to thinking about students holistically, to better understand them as individuals. Learning about gender, sexual orientation, race, and ethnicity contextualized education and students in ways he had never thought before. Nonetheless, he felt as if he was too far removed from the presented case studies. Bruce remarked that while research suggests certain protocols for any given situation, until it becomes a personal experience, it is difficult to decipher how he might respond. Considering learning about student trauma specifically, his only recollection was a scenario in which he studied a student who became paralyzed after a car accident. The trauma impact was on school supports and how he had to relearn important aspects of his day-to-day life.

During Eve's preservice teaching experience, she disclosed that she had not had much professional development as it pertained to student trauma. In her teacher preparation program, she took an exceptional child course, which discussed emotional and physical trauma, two years prior.

Available supports. Participants described several supports available to assist them in supporting students who may have experienced trauma.

Nigel indicated administration, record keeping, make-up work, and attendance as available supports. He credited his cooperating teacher as the person who absolutely helped him in the classroom, allowing him to focus on his teaching.

Dash conveyed supports as his cooperating teacher and building administration, similarly to Nigel. In addition, he mentioned the school counselor, his master teachers at University, and

his parents, both of whom have taught in the district for over thirty years. As well, his father was an administrator.

Joy identified counselors and added full time school psychologists and special education teachers, whom she felt were her closest support because they were always available. She referenced students advocating for themselves to see the counselor, but she admitted not knowing the process of when this was appropriate or how it needed to happen. She discussed recognizing students were self-advocating for their needs, which lessened her worry. Her concern was having to act quickly and efficiently in case of an emergency. Joy cited the best she would be able to do was call the closest office pod and ask for someone to call a counselor. “This feels really inadequate, when you are the adult in the room and something happens and you do not know what to do.”

Woody referred to the school psychologist, in addition to the few friends he had who were majoring in psychology, as his supports. Riley cited friends who were student teaching as her supports, while Eve credited her cooperating teacher as her support. In fact, Eve stated that she would have to go to him to find out who the supports were in the building, indicating that this information was not shared with preservice teachers.

Bruce found his mentor teacher and other teachers in the math department as indicative of providing the knowledge and pedagogy he needed in supporting student trauma. He described daily conversations where teachers discussed their experiences. Specifically, he chronicled the story of the student who drove his mom to the hospital, where she later died. He came to school the next day, and the teacher, who this student came to, was surprised by the interaction. As an experienced teacher, she shared with Bruce how that experience was new for her. For Bruce,

hearing the experiences of others, in addition to their expertise in providing strategies for application in student trauma situations, is what supports him best.

Unlike a few of the participants, Bruce mentioned that he had no direct contact with administration, which he found surprising given the increase of student suicide in his building. However, he did attend professional development training on the topic, which was led by the administrator and school counselor. During that training, the administrator discussed the supports that were available not only for students, but also for faculty. Even though Bruce had not directly communicated with the administrator, he still cited administration as a strong support.

Mentor teacher support in understanding student trauma. Nigel described a mentor teacher who provided him with less than the specifics concerning students' personal lives. He specified that his mentor teacher was proficient in truly knowing his students: their background, home lives, family issues, etcetera, but he was less specific in sharing that information with Nigel. In fact, Nigel shared that in terms of trauma, "that term never came up."

Dash marveled at the way his mentor teacher really knew and understood the backgrounds of their students. Unlike Nigel's experience, Dash's mentor teacher took time to communicate specific information through scenarios as they met and discussed his classroom teaching progress. Dash shared an anecdote about a student who was in between family members, who lived across several states, due to a history of family trauma. His mentor teacher ensured Dash had the necessary information so he could be successful in his interactions with the student. Dash felt as if the collaboration between he and his mentor teacher was solid, as they provided each other with invaluable support.

As Dash learned to apply strategies gained from his mentor teacher in his future educational career, he suggested being able to know students as the best way to understand and

support their needs, especially if they have trauma histories. He stated, “Every case is so unique that you just cannot have a book that tells you what to do.” It is important to be proficient in meeting student basic needs to assist in their recovery.

Joy compared the support of her mentor teacher to that of the emails she received from the counseling office stating that he has been the better support. She reflected on how well he knows students, community, and information needed to support individual students on an application level. Joy believed that her mentor teacher could put the information shared by counselors into greater perspective because he provided her with the data she was entitled to have, but not necessarily shared with her by the counselor. She described many examples of how her mentor teacher put information into context, for example trauma histories or mental health diagnosis, that made an immediate difference in her classroom management with students. He also modeled his efficient check-in process with students, something of which Joy did not realize until she saw it in action.

This caused Joy to comprehend supporting students with trauma histories is a process, which might occur at several intervals throughout the school day. She stressed the importance of the way in which her mentor took time to explain strategies without expressing frustration at the frequency Joy asked for additional support or clarification. As she considered her application of knowledge shared by her mentor, Joy reflected, “I feel like he is helping me build the skills that the district did not help me build.”

Woody’s mentor teachers have discussed the importance of being relaxed, supporting students, and empathizing in every situation when it comes to supporting traumatized students. His most important learning is letting students take control of the conversation; if students do not want to talk about their personal issues, then do not push it. He prioritized permitting students to

feel as if they were not a burden and granting them the opportunity to get help in a safe space. His mentor teachers assisted Woody in better supporting students who have experienced trauma by emphasizing authentically caring for the kids and offering genuine support.

In describing the support of her mentor teacher, Riley divulged that she has been supportive. Her mentor was straightforward in sharing informative information about the students. Not only was Riley's mentor honest in sharing information, she did so as part of the natural reflective process of Riley sharing her day and expressing concerns about behaviors, lessons, and management of her classroom. Riley elaborated she was seeing behaviors and noticing characteristics of students without being able to designate the behaviors were a result of trauma. Having her mentor teacher provide information as Riley was engaged in gathering anecdotal data about her students, allowed her to better accommodate and modify her own perceptions of why students behaved as they did.

Eve voiced her mentor teacher supported her understanding of trauma by meeting with her regularly about students. She mentioned that he often sat in class while she was teaching, so they both could confer on the successes and obstacles that occurred during class. She learned that content was not an issue for her; however, she really struggled with young female, students, especially those whom have had experiences with trauma. Eve felt as though they did not have respect for her. Her mentor's support consisted of providing strategies and resources to assist Eve in building improved relationships with not only female, but all students. The best advice Eve received from her mentor teacher was to determine student strengths and approach their learning from a strengths-based perspective.

This information provided the catalyst for Eve to delve deeper into her students' experiences. She took time to review their personal files, which assisted her in understanding one

student a little better. She learned that this student did not have a strong female figure in her life, so she was able to engage with this student in a way that allowed her to build a relationship without being too invasive. She acknowledged her mentor teacher was the greatest support in this endeavor, not only because he has been an educator for over fifteen years, but also because he was an active participant in Eve's success. She utilized all that he has shared with her by being more proactive in her future role as an educator.

Advice for teacher preparation programs or district professional develop. Raising awareness of trauma is important. Nigel felt as though the course about differentiation he took in his college preparation program could have incorporated more trauma information. Holding district professional development accountable for sharing information about students who have been identified with special education or mental health concerns should be regarded as important for all teachers, not just special education teachers. Nigel's concern is with all the information that is available on students, general education teachers need to have more information. Finally, his most valuable advice is to increase the empathy of teachers. This, along with the sensitivity of how the teacher, does not hurt anything. As Nigel stated, "It does not hurt anything to be more empathetic as a person."

Dash reiterated Nigel's thinking regarding empathy. "Not everyone can be as compassionate and open as they need to be." He showed his sense of humor when he suggested that having a program that would make more people compassionate would be the best thing to do. Since that will not happen, Dash encouraged teacher preparation courses to emphasize that compassion is what will best support students who have experienced trauma. He continued to recommend that programs need to instruct teachers to adapt to students and their needs, rather than expect students to adapt to teacher or curriculum needs. He echoed a quote learned from a

former teacher, “This is their story, not your story.” Students come to school because they are developing their life story. With that in mind, Dash conveyed teacher preparation programs need to shift their thinking from strict academic focus to a better understanding of student needs. He used the example of a student, who hates math, attending his math class. While the teacher should not take the student’s dislike for math personally, he should take notice when that student shares with the teacher an experience that might truly affect them down the road in their day-to-day lives. “That is something we need to get under control.”

Dash also suggested programs focus on educator empathy and authenticity. He believed when educators lacked passion and compassion, students felt it, thus fostering a lack of passion and compassion in students. He affirmed students know whether teachers care, and if a teacher does not care, then why should a student care. Dash finalized his advice for teacher preparation programs and district staff development by simply asserting all educators should be better human beings, through being open, willing, and reasonable. Had he not had his student teaching experience, he would have never understood how to better support students.

Joy focused on the specific needs of middle school and secondary educators in her response. She referred to the traditional training that emphasized noticing students who seemed hungry or who had poor hygiene. She advocated for teacher preparation programs, and district staff development, to develop educator knowledge in characteristics of students who masked their personal trauma experiences and provided ‘identifiable, quantifiable triggers’ that can be noticed in kids “who are trying to suck it up and just move past” their experiences. Joy upheld that secondary educators suffer from having students at shorter intervals throughout the day, unlike elementary educators who can witness student behaviors in various environments throughout the day and more easily sense what might be happening with a student.

Woody echoed Joy's response by advising teacher preparation programs and district professional development to cultivate calming practices for students who might be triggered in the classroom. He recounted his abnormal psychology class, and the information in the DSM-V, as something that decently prepared him for the classroom situations he might encounter. Woody also stressed "starting the conversation" with what to say, how to say it, when to say it, and here is the line one should or should not cross when supporting students who have experienced trauma.

Riley was most concerned about what is happening with today's students. She offered advice to teacher preparation programs and district professional development. Although many of her college professors taught in K-12 schools at one time, she referenced their experiences as being out of date. She suggested using more real-life situations as an alternative. For example, student teachers could submit questions to teachers who are currently in the classroom, asking for suggestions on how they might handle certain situations. For Riley, hearing a professor or administrator say, "back when I . . ." indicates that the information about to be given is out of date and may not be relevant to today's student.

"I can only get so much experience, and really, I only have one semester of experience before I have my own classroom," remarked Bruce. He shared that experience is the most vital to his success as an educator. He urged teacher preparation programs to find more ways to make case studies real. He explained that his preparation program was different in that it was geared toward working adults. Most of his peers were full-time teachers, so he relied on their expertise as they shared anecdotes of classroom experience. Riley suggested a similar idea. Bruce further identified that professional development, as well as teacher preparation programs, could house college courses in school settings, merging research with practice. He recognized the importance

of district professional development; however, he advocated they be conducted in small group settings rather than entire curriculum departments. Bruce advocated for small groups, explaining it would be more productive to discuss student needs and the ways in which others have managed similar situations. While he appreciates getting feedback from his math teaching peers, he added that cross curricular small groups would assist him in meeting student needs in a variety of ways. He summarized his advice by identifying that he is in a position where he wants to hear what others have experienced and how they have managed various situations.

Eve's advice included more time and more information. "I wish I would have had more days in the classroom." She proposed preservice programs teach theories in classroom management, curriculum, and lesson plan design, but even with that knowledge, preservice teachers do not know what they are doing until they get to experience the theory actively during their preservice teaching. She pointed out the disparity between just sitting in the classroom, observing her first few weeks, and her actual time teaching. She reiterated that because her program focused more on theory and observation, she knew her classroom management would need improvement. For her preservice teaching program, more time teaching and planning should be considered in the future.

In advising districts, Eve recommended having a specific day where student teachers can go to district offices and discuss the various supports available to teachers. Attributing her mentor teacher as her greatest support, she asserted that without his knowledge, she had no idea how to or where to go to support for some of her challenged students. She credited student teachers with wanting to obtain jobs in the districts with which they student taught; therefore, being able to meet district departments and personnel who could assist teachers in supporting traumatized students would only increase preservice teachers' autonomy.

Finally, Eve stressed that she learned more during her student teaching than through any other part of her program. Preservice programs and districts should consider providing greater opportunities for educators to learn about and build relationships for students. Eve advocated for helping young teachers understand that teaching is about building relationships, rather than creating the barrier of authoritative teacher. The role for educators is to get to know each student; every student is different and every student has different needs. When twenty-four individual students are presented to teachers in class, the task of building relationships and understanding each as an individual becomes overwhelming. Eve alluded that she thinks most about “how can I fix this,” when it comes to meeting student needs. She recognized their behaviors are not personal, but Eve constantly reminds herself that they are sixteen and what they really need are positive, consistent adults to support their individual needs.

Conclusion. It is important for preservice teachers to become familiar with the average maturation and ramifications of trauma on student’s educational and social-emotional acquisition. This might improve the ways in which teachers administer their time with students and might boost their confidence in supporting students’ needs in the classroom setting. Preservice teachers should be positioned to solve such concerns in the classroom, which are conducive to providing suitable supports, rather than directing them to the office.

Chapter Five: Discussion

Overview

The purpose of this study was to analyze what current secondary preservice teachers understood about educating students who have experienced trauma and their perceptions of being prepared to support such students. This study pursued the answer to the following questions:

- How do preservice teachers define trauma?
- How do preservice teachers perceive the impact of trauma on student learning in the classroom?
- What is the perception of preservice teachers' preparedness to support and educate students who have experienced trauma?

This chapter begins with a review of the methodology employed in this qualitative research, followed by an analysis of findings that have practical significance to preservice teachers' support of traumatized students in the general education setting, as well as to preservice teacher education programs and professional development offerings, which foster educator understanding of trauma. The subsequent sections offer limitations and implications for future research.

Review of Methodology

As detailed in Chapter Three, I utilized narrative methods within a qualitative study to procure understanding into the perceptions of preservice teachers' preparedness in supporting traumatized students. As a qualitative endeavor, the study depended chiefly on the testimonies of seven participants, who shared their experiences as preservice teachers in the final phase of their preservice teaching. In interviews that lasted approximately forty-five minutes each, preservice teachers commented on their personal experiences as they related to understanding student

trauma, the effect of student trauma on the classroom learning environment, and their perceived ability to support students in the general education setting. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed for thematic content.

Summary of Findings

There is a significant gap in research literature that addresses the preparedness of preservice teachers in supporting students who have experienced trauma (Alisic et al. 2012). While the research on trauma informed care is expanding, it often overlooks how preservice teachers are being prepared in their teacher education programs.

Question one: How do preservice teachers define trauma?

Preservice teachers' personal experiences are compelling in terms of how it frames and regulates their beliefs and pedagogy in the classroom. Furthermore, critical reflection on personal experiences is vital for preservice teachers to provide purposeful and authentic supports to traumatized students (Morgan et al., 2013; Morgan, Pendergast, Brown, & Heck, 2014). Clandinin (2013) suggests this occurs because, "We all live our narratives in our lives and because we understand our own lives in terms of the narratives" (p.10), which improves the comprehension of others' actions. Therefore, teachers perceive learners in ways that are linked to their sense of how they understand themselves and the assorted determinants that construct this perception.

For the present study, preservice teachers defined and recognized trauma as an intense encounter that can infinitely undermine one's notion of security and safety, similar to the definition presented by Brunzell, Stokes, and Waters (2018). In further defining the characteristics of security and safety, preservice teachers cited empathy, differentiation, and positive relationships as principles that guide them to better understand the youth with whom

they worked. Participant responses also revealed a deficiency in understanding affected trauma populations and the appropriateness of intervention. For example, Bruce revealed the importance of recognizing student behaviors; however, he questioned knowing when it was appropriate to intervene or take the next step to support students. Nigel felt he would be as sensitive as possible to student experiences, but he was not going to pry.

Empathy. Participant responses revealed an empathetic theme as they defined trauma and how their personal experiences framed their definitions. Responses emphasized putting themselves in their students' shoes and providing time for support and conversation. Dash reported he liked to hear other people's traumas and then try to put himself in their shoes. This allowed him to see the experience through the students' eyes and to determine what he would want and need, thus assisting him as he responded to student needs. Woody explained that he tried to be as openly supportive as possible. He gave students as much time as they needed to think about what they needed to say. Many educators who exhibit characteristics of "tolerance, empathy, interest, and respect for students" manifest a supportive classroom environment, especially as it relates to youth with increased vulnerabilities (Krane, Ness, Holter-Sorensen, Karlsson, & Binder, 2016, p. 376). In their study on teacher-student relationships, Krane et al. (2016) discovered students appreciated teachers who took time to listen to their problems and support their emotional needs. Obsuth, Murray, Malti, Sulgar, Ribeaud, and Eisner (2016) considered student disposition as the catalyst for student-teacher relationships, as "they are likely to be adversely affected by problem behavior or poor social competence on the part of the student" (p. 1662).

Differentiation. Sousa and Tomlinson (2017) believe educators should have a global view of students, seeing students as they see themselves, and "differentiating instruction is a

manifestation of teacher empathy for students.” Differentiation is one way to meet individual students’ learning needs in the classroom. Tomlinson (2014) elaborates on the very nature of differentiation.

Differentiation is not an instructional strategy, a collection of strategies, or a teaching model. It is a way of thinking about teaching and learning that advocates beginning where individuals are rather than with a prescribed plan of action that ignores student variance. It is a way of thinking that challenges how educators typically envision assessment, teaching, learning, classroom roles, uses of time, and curriculum. (170)

Tomlinson’s (2000) philosophy includes the following ideas:

- Students who are the same age differ in their readiness to learn, their interests, their styles of learning, their experiences, and their life circumstances.
- The differences in students are significant enough to make a major impact on what students need to learn, the pace at which they need to learn it, and the support they need from teachers and others to learn it well.
- Students will learn best when supportive adults push them slightly beyond where they can work without assistance.
- Students will learn best when they can make a connection between the curriculum and their interests and life experiences.
- Students will learn best when learning opportunities are natural.
- Students are more effective learners when classrooms and schools create a sense of community in which students feel significant and respected.
- The central job of schools is to maximize the capacity of each student. (p. 6)

One participant specifically named differentiation in his definition of trauma, while others inferred it through their empathetic statements and defining specific student needs. Nigel emphasized getting to know students, rather than relying on information in their personal file allowed him to differentiate instruction based on student experiences. Furthermore, Nigel believed by doing this, he was removing trauma as a barrier to learning. The complexity of supporting traumatized students combined with meeting academic goals presented conflict for preservice teachers. Joy specified she had students in her classes who attended not for the sake of learning, but rather because they needed to be in a place where they felt supported. She concluded her academic thought process has shifted from “let’s get that A” to “Hey, let’s make sure you get through the day and ensure you feel safe and supported.” The reality existed that in trauma-informed teaching practices, differentiation exemplifies an authentic approach to supporting adolescents who have experienced trauma. If schools of teacher preparation envelope preservice teachers with prosocial strategies in positive classroom environment creation, traumatized students will make connections in the classroom that aid in the safety of their learning.

Positive relationships. Learners who experience insecurities connected to trauma necessitate distinctive interactions with teachers. Participants’ responses implied understanding where students are positioned in their trauma experiences boosts the need for educators to create a classroom environment that promotes post-traumatic healing and growth (Perry, 2006). In fact, three participants specifically cited their personal affect and classroom climate as effective in maintaining student safety and comfortability. Dash mentioned that comfort was the biggest dynamic he looked for in his classroom. If students were not comfortable, they would not learn. Bruce noted he was very relaxed as a teacher and his classroom environment was very open and

talkative. This allowed him to engage students in conversation and to notice their behavior patterns. Woody recognized the importance of being genuine as he interacted with students, citing students can sense this trait. The literature suggests successful teachers emphasize affirmative relationships rather than disciplinary behavior management, which can be humiliating for students (Morgan et al., 2015). Krane, Ness, Holter-Sorensen, Karlsson, and Binder (2016) discovered students prefer casual conversations with teachers that allow them to problem solve and resolve conflict. The use of humor, recognition, adjustments, and accommodations also increased positive student teacher relationships (Krane et al., 2016). Thus, providing an impetus of study for preservice teachers in the best ways to mitigate positive relationships in the classroom will benefit students academically and emotionally.

Trauma-affected populations. A few participants struggled with identifying that trauma occurred in all socioeconomic levels, suggesting the need for enhanced preservice teacher training for early identification of traumatized youth. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (2014) reported teachers may surmise that several students could be trauma-affected if they work within schools located in disadvantaged municipalities. Eve emphasized her students were affluent and gifted, as they all were enrolled in her AP class, and Woody and Dash described student populations as affluent and predominantly white. Bruce noted there was not a lot of diversity in his high school, and his advanced math students did not need to be discussed, as they are all great students. All participants seemed unaware that trauma does not have socioeconomic bias. The awareness of childhood trauma has become prevalent; every student is susceptible, as it occurs universally, in all populations and environments, in all socio-economic levels, throughout cultural and ethnic communities, inside all faiths, and every stage of schooling (SAMSHA, 2018). Given participants considered their schools to be more affluent, and 40% of

students are exposed to traumatic events, the understanding of trauma-informed practices has extensive capacity in all socioeconomic school communities. Furthermore, increasing opportunities for preservice teachers to understand the implications of adolescent trauma experiences on learning furnishes them with the proficiencies to intervene and support students as necessary.

Appropriateness of intervention. In their research on enhancing resilience in schools, Wolmer, Hamiel, Margalit, Versano-Eisman, Findler, Laor, and Sloane (2016) shared, “Teacher delivered interventions have been found to significantly improve students’ well-being and adaptation following exposure to traumatic events” (p. 25). As preservice teachers delineate their definitions of trauma, they lacked confidence in knowing when to intervene or to engage with students whom they suspected of having traumatic experiences. Joy addressed not knowing what steps to take to support students in crisis. She emphasized the best she could do was call the closest office pod or school counselor, which felt like an inadequate response from the adult in the room. Nigel offered being as sensitive as possible without being invasive. Furthermore, they indicated not being trained as counselors, which limited their aptitude in providing the correct support for traumatized students. Woody referenced this when he discussed treating students with “kid gloves.” Although he wanted to give them his attention, he was concerned with retraumatizing students because he was not a trained counselor. Although teachers are not mental health providers, they could be trauma-informed to “redress the specific learning capacities that trauma impacts which students must develop for successful learning: increasing self-regulatory abilities and increasing relational capacities” (Brunzell et al., 2018, p. 117).

Question two: How do preservice teachers perceive the impact of trauma on student learning in the classroom?

Preservice teachers enter the classroom prepared to support student learning; however, they often find themselves overwhelmed by classroom management and student behaviors (Alisic et al., 2012). Behaviors that appear as aggression, isolation, and disengagement, to name a few, could be a child's response to trauma, which also ruptures academic success and interpersonal relationships (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2013; Leiter, 2007). In fact, youth who have experienced one or more ACEs find themselves at a disadvantage when it comes to learning at school (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2015; Crozier & Barth, 2005). Brunzell et al. (2016) addressed this in their research on trauma-informed positive education (TIPE), citing "Adverse childhood experiences due to trauma from abuse or neglect have significant and potentially devastating effects on effective classroom learning and connections to future education or vocational pathways" (p. 220). When educators are tasked with devoting additional time to support traumatized students, it further impinges their accessibility and efficiency of harnessing classroom time and resources. Preservice teachers perceived the impact of trauma on student learning resulted from classroom behaviors, triggers, individual education plans (IEPs), addressing personal needs, and social and cognitive development.

Trauma behaviors. Research participants confirmed witnessing student behaviors of isolation, disengagement, defiance, and aggressiveness. Eve recalled the young girl in her class who refused to follow directions or to participate. Her verbal interactions were aggressive and defiant in nature. Woody discussed the young band student who played while wearing her hood; she rarely engaged with others and consistently isolated herself. He also mentioned students who appeared to not care about their learning or engagement in class. They also noticed attention-getting behaviors, such as students trying too hard to fit in, as an attempt to make friends or as a needy behavior. Riley recounted the behaviors witnessed of a young girl in her class who acts

out by being funny and acting silly in front of her peers, yet with the teacher she was shy, did not make eye contact, and never shared personal information. Participants did not mention perfectionistic or extreme self-reliant behaviors, which can also be signs of trauma. Adolescents profit from feeling connected and accepted in the classroom setting, which manifests positive and healthy coping proficiencies (Brunzell et al., 2016; Morgan et al., 2015). In trauma-informed educational settings, it is vital that the interactions between student and teacher are a secure channel to academic success; additionally, student-to-student interactions should bolster security and acceptance inside the classroom (Brunzell et al., 2016).

Trigger behaviors. Participants disclosed deficiency in understanding trigger behaviors. In fact, Joy questioned how she would know triggers unless she specifically asked. Joy stated it was hard to be proactive regarding trigger avoidance when she was unaware of what they were for specific students. She thoughtfully shared that she would just ask, but that might set off some sort of reaction. Eve divulged that she had not had any experiences with trigger behaviors, as far as she knew. The considerable impingement from trauma on an adolescent's propensity to perform in academic settings creates the necessity to observe the behavioral reactions from a trauma-informed perspective (Tishelman & Geffner, 2011). Today, a common mantra is to view students from the perspective of "what has happened to you to make you behave in this manner" rather than "why do you behave this way." Riley discussed a youth whose behavior was impeding his learning. She shared how "he started bawling" when she privately talked to him about his behavior and disrespect during class. She stated, "I knew it was not toward me, and I knew this was not his normal behavior." Trauma-affected youth might experience enduring struggles in school stemming from day-to-day classroom stressors, such as "new learning, physical and cognitive delays, and behavioral expectations that trigger their already dysregulated

arousal responses” (Brunzell et al., 2015, p. 220). Crosby (2015) extends this difficulty for traumatized students by suggesting even as they manage their symptoms in the classroom, traditional curricula and assignments can become triggering. Preservice teachers need to effectually construct assignments thoughtful to the problems that traumatized learners have experienced, evading possibly triggering subject matter (Zetlin, MacLeod, & Kimm, 2012).

Individual education plans (IEP). Research participants reported school counselors, mentor teachers, special education teachers, and student IEP and 504 plans as the main purveyors of information on student traumas. Preservice teachers claimed access to the information was difficult to attain and was imparted by mentor teachers. Riley shared, “We are aware for the most part of IEPs.” Nigel stated, “I know there are 504 plans and specific things tagged on student permanent files, but I have never seen any tagging for trauma.” Dash commented, “If they have an IEP or 504 plan . . . hopefully there would be information in there.” IEP information appeared to be the most valuable to preservice teachers, as they believed the goals, objectives, services, and intervention information was critical in understanding student behaviors. However, while teacher education programs offer courses on special education and the mainstreaming of students in the general education setting, confusion exists on what information is on an IEP. Findings are supported by Buxton’s (2018) research, which revealed that students’ diagnosed with emotional disturbance (ED) have IEPs associated with “three of the four functional core domains in which children may show possible trauma-related difficulties in school” (p. 44). Trauma may not specifically be stated on an adolescent’s IEP. Unless a special education student has a simultaneous disorder or special education diagnosis, along with a cited trauma experience, the resources for teachers supporting traumatized students are rare. Furthermore, if trauma is the singular concern for students, it is improbable they have the selected resources or interventions a

special education student is entitled to, even though a traumatized student demonstrates a comparable diversion to the learning environment (Nash, Schlosser, & Scarr, 2015).

Addressing student personal needs. As indicated in research question one, preservice teachers struggled with the confidence or the knowledge of when to intervene, or rather ask, youth if they are experiencing adversities outside of the school environment. As preservice teachers responded to question two, this theme continued; however, it was specific in addressing how to meet the personal needs of students who may have experienced trauma. Woody commented, “I do not want to pry because then it can cause so many issues—public embarrassment, etc.” Joy revealed in her experience with one student, “I was a little concerned because I am a student teacher and I do not have a history with these kids; I asked my coordinating teacher how much am I allowed to talk about with them? What do I do?” As evidenced in Krane et al. (2016), teachers who address students’ personal needs are helpful, and when assisted with personal concerns and academic struggles, students felt teachers “contributed to their well-being” (p. 392). Tolerance.org suggests “Students respond positively when educators get to know their individual circumstances, affirm their identities and cultivate empathy in the classroom.”

Further analysis of preservice teachers’ responses to this question indicated a limited understanding of behavior response and appropriate teacher intervention. Joy discussed having been told about a student’s circumstance:

We have been told they are going through these issues, but they do not show stereotypical signs most days. If I had not been told, I probably would not have known. It has made me question how well I think I know the trauma-based stuff because it is not covered in undergrad very much.

As mentioned in trauma and trigger behaviors, participants cited aggressive or withdrawal responses in classroom interactions. Dash remarked, “I had a student come in who was just kind of sad. She shut down.” Eve described a male student, “He wasn’t showering. I could tell he had greasy hair and clothes he had worn the day before. He was not trying.” She also discussed a student’s aggressive behavior, “She does not respect me in the classroom for whatever reason,” Bruce mentioned a student whose brother had recently taken his life, “I hate to say you can just tell from looking at her face, but you can tell she is sad or something happened to make her think about it.” In their analysis of trauma-informed teaching models, Brunzell et al. (2015) discovered healing the dysregulated stress response and addressing attachment capacity were the two most mentioned intervention areas. For dysregulated stress response, preservice teachers should be instructed in mindfulness, effective activity transition within the classroom, and student opportunities for identifying emotional responses and trigger experiences (Brunzell et al., 2015; Perry, 2009). Providing preservice teachers with specific strategies to nurture classroom relationships through strengths-based schemes, allows them to intervene and support traumatized students authentically (Brunzell et al., 2015).

Social and cognitive development. Sousa and Tomlinson (2017) account student physical safety and emotional security as the stimulus for the brain to concentrate on cognitive learning. In fact, the resilient energy of emotion engages the limbic system, especially when students experience negativity, which collapses cognitive processing and heightens survival fight or flight behaviors in the classroom (Black et al., 2012; Carrion et al., 2012; Sousa et al., 2017). Results of this study indicate that preservice teachers lack recognition of cognitive and social implications of trauma on student learning. When asked to describe witnessed student behaviors and how they related to student social, cognitive, and emotional development, they responded

with examples of behaviors without the impact of the behavior on cognitive, social, and emotional development. For example, Nigel responded “You could be sensitive to outward behaviors that are manifested without necessarily knowing what caused them.” Dash shared, “Classroom wise they distance themselves from the work and probably would not participate much.” Riley responded, “School is not his priority. I mean he has so many other things that he is worried about and I see that with a lot of kids.” If preservice teachers were acquainted with an adequate understanding of adolescents’ normal growth and development and the effects of trauma on their educational and social-emotional learning, they could maximize the time they had with students in the classroom by getting to know their students and addressing students’ individual needs. This has the potential to increase the comfort level of preservice teachers’ abilities to support traumatized students. Preservice teacher preparation should render the needed competencies for systematic support of traumatized students.

Question three: What is the perception of preservice teachers’ preparedness to support and educate students who have experienced trauma?

College coursework. Preservice educators rarely receive relevant instruction on trauma in their teacher preparatory curricula, hindering them from wholly grasping its effect on adolescents and from implementing strategies to tackle it in the classroom (Alisic et al., 2012; Ko, Ford, Kassam-Adams, Berkowitz, Wilson, & Wong, 2008). Subsequently, unless university professors add trauma into the discussion, preservice teachers miss learning the material in their preparation. The preservice teachers in this study indicated course requirements in special education and child development, but the discourse lacked relevant research regarding cognitive, social, and emotional development. Woody shared that training was basically an abnormal psych class. “In all fairness, we did have a human growth and development class that kind of touched

on trauma, but that was maybe a couple of days.” Eve commented, “I have taken one class about the exceptional child special education course where we touched base on emotional trauma and physical trauma and things like that, but that was probably two years ago.” Joy declared, “Special education support in the exceptional child, but not everybody who has trauma is going to be in SPED services, so that does not really apply.” Bruce discussed his multicultural education course as more supportive than his special education course. Furthermore, participants revealed the ill-effects of trauma on student learning was not covered, thereby creating feelings of inadequateness once they entered the classroom as a preservice teacher. Bruce revealed, “Trauma we did not talk about specifically, aside from understanding that hey, every student is not coming to your class from the same background.” Joy mentioned, “Training is inadequate. It is great that they focus on the specifics of what is happening in districts and the community, but the specifics do not really fill itself out to the broader picture for us.”

School supports. Preservice teachers indicated special education teachers and school counselors as the building level supports in assisting with traumatized students. Bruce suggested information about students and the adversities they faced was often delivered by the administrator, yet this same preservice teacher never had any interaction with said administrator. In fact, he assumed his mentor teacher received important information from the administrator, which was then passed along to him. This provokes the question: In what ways are preservice teachers notified of the school’s supports available to them when they are having trouble supporting students who have experienced trauma?

None of the preservice teachers cited the school social worker as a person of support. “We get regular updates from the counselors when something touchy is going on specifically,” reported Joy, and Woody claimed the “School psychologist; if you have any issues I know you

can go to them and they can offer assistance or an opinion or some sort of plan.” Crosby (2015) suggested all educators should form a cooperative partnership with school social workers and other educators to problem solve student concerns. She claimed school social workers:

Should also assume a pivotal role in providing behavioral health skills and knowledge to other school staff, as well as a holistic perspective of student development. School social workers can assist teachers and support staff in developing strategies for dealing with difficult behavioral problems or students with complex issues. (p. 228)

One preservice teacher discussed the collaboration with other teachers during lunch, professional learning communities (PLCs), and professional development, but suggested lunch and PLCs as the priority time to problem solve, as the MSD did not allow time for this during professional development. Bruce reported specifically, “I would say direct coworkers, right? The ones I see every day; the ones I work and talk with directly. During lunch when we are in the math office it gives us an opportunity to talk . . . This is a learning opportunity for someone like me, being new and going to be a first-year teacher.”

Mentor/preservice teacher relationship. The findings from this research indicated that preservice teachers viewed their mentor teacher as a valuable resource when it came to better understanding individual student needs. Descriptions of support included mentor teachers as collaborators and coaches in the process of identifying strategies and supports to use with all students. There also appeared to be variance in the results, as two participants expressed concern about knowing all the information they could about students. They felt as if their cooperating teachers could not share specific information or they shared information not intended for preservice teachers. Nigel offered about his cooperating teacher, “He is less specific with me . . . there are issues at home [with student] and he will leave it at that.” In discussing her cooperating

teacher, Joy shared, “He’s been able to give more background information that I am entitled to have but was not necessarily given.” These suggested opportunities for improving communication between preservice and cooperating teachers, sharing information about the backgrounds and nuances of individual students and their classroom needs. University programs and partner school districts need to clarify expectations regarding information sharing, privacy, and the platforms by which preservice teachers can gain access to needed information.

Preservice teachers’ stress response. Participants’ responses indicated they often lacked the experience to comprehend the trauma experiences faced by some of their students. Bruce stated, “Knowing what is appropriate, knowing the responsible next steps. I would say I do not have that experience yet.” Although they stressed empathy as a strategy employed while supporting students, they felt inadequate in truly understanding the current position in which their students were situated. Joy responded, “I did what I feel like I would have wanted somebody else to do in that situation: just let them get off their chest and I empathized . . . I was super uncomfortable.” Furthermore, they indicated feelings of frustration when they could not solve a youth’s behavior or understand why students chose to not participate or to be involved in classroom discussions. Bruce discussed making himself available to students and honoring their space during class discussions when students are not interested in participating. “That’s a time where maybe I am not asking her a question in front of the whole class because the last thing she wants to deal with is being put on the spot or answering questions.” Woody shared, “I am very much of a problem solver, but I give them all the time they need,” and Dash mentioned a student who was withdrawn from class, “I knew she was not going to be doing any more work that day. She got up, left quickly, and I let her do her own thing. I did not pester her at that point.” Supporting traumatized students in the classroom could leave preservice teachers feeling

distressed by their students' trauma experiences through lingering effects, causing them to feel inadequate in their sensitivity toward students (Brunzell et al., 2016). Trauma-informed educators must cultivate a resilient tenacity to recognize their own anxiety with the stressed milieu of the classroom (Brunzell et al., 2015). Participants did not connect their frustrations with the emotional transference of taking on their student's trauma histories.

Advice for teacher preparation programs. Participants had a multitude of advice for preservice teaching programs. The first of which was more real-world experience. Participants stated their university course work did not prepare them for supporting students in the same manner student teaching did. In fact, when it came to trauma specifically, they felt as if their coursework lacked depth and breadth in this area. Woody reflected on his abnormal psychology class.

Teaching us a few calming strategies to resolve triggers. Going over the DSM-V was helpful on situations I might come across, but not on starting conversations. Starting the conversation with what to say, how to say it, and where to draw the line.

Many described their lab coursework as a place where they observed and had little to no interaction in the classroom with students or teachers. They expressed a desire to spend more time in classrooms, working with youth and having opportunities to problem-solve and better understand individual student needs. Eve shared, "I wish I would have had more days in the actual classroom. You know, working with the teacher super early, developing lesson plans, and practicing classroom management." They also saw the benefit of planning and collaborating with teachers prior to student teaching, enabling them to see how teachers create and implement plans in the classroom.

Along with working collaboratively with teachers prior to preservice teaching, participants suggested the possibility of learning networks, where they could provide career educators with questions pertaining to how certain situations might be handled. Specifically, they were looking for the step beyond the lab courses traditionally used in school. They advocated for preparing predetermined questions related to concerns of what they experienced in the classroom, perhaps a panel discussion with career educators, to discuss the possible strategies one might use in supporting traumatized students. Riley offered, “More real-world examples. I think having teachers come or maybe have them submit things that say the student is doing this.” Bruce shared, “Finding more ways to make case studies real. I think case studies are a great way to read about a situation, discuss a situation, and determine how one might work through a situation, but really, before you have that in-class experience, it is hard.” The idea presented extends the typical case study into a real-world case study with strategies that could be immediately applied in the classroom setting.

Limitations

The results of this research may spark an interest to university teacher preparation programs, school district professional development councils, and educators, both preservice and inservice, committed to the preparation of preservice teachers as they enter today’s classroom to support diverse student populations, including the support of students who have experienced trauma. While a meaningful effort was created to deliver a prolific narrative describing preservice teacher perceptions of supporting students who have experienced trauma, it was slightly narrow in scale. Particularly, this study was conducted with a limited sample of preservice secondary teachers from one Midwestern school district (MSD). Although invitations were sent to twenty secondary preservice teachers within the district, only seven chose to

participate. The possibility exists that these preservice teachers chose to participate because of encouragement from their mentor teachers, their experiences with students in their classrooms, or their own personal trauma experiences. Finally, the MSD has initiated enhanced professional development opportunities for all educators in trauma-informed practice, which may have provided background knowledge for participants had they engaged in said development. Thus, the results from this sample cannot generalize to the experiences of all teachers within the district, nor can the experiences of the preservice teachers in this district generalize to those who teach in other districts. Because of sharing these narratives, I anticipate readers will critically analyze their own frameworks and govern the level to which the results of this research are transferrable.

The various definitions of trauma as stated in this study and within the literature presents another limitation to this study. Preservice teachers were asked to define trauma based on their background knowledge, which led to an assortment of responses. While most focused on a life-changing event, such as abuse, death of a loved one, or an accident, few described experiences such as divorce or neglect. Even when participants shared how their personal experiences informed their definition, several did not correlate their experiences as traumatic in nature. Considering the numerous differences in the ways preservice teachers defined trauma, it is difficult to imagine the various ways trauma might manifest itself in the classroom. Furthermore, trauma research advocates for an all-encompassing definition. Finally, students who struggle with trauma may exhibit behaviors that are concurrent with other disorders; difficulties may exist in determining which are indicative of childhood trauma and which are characteristic of another malady or diagnosis.

My professional career encompasses working with adolescents, many of whom have struggled with the aftermath of trauma, in a residential treatment facility. A focused effort to triangulate data through the process of interviewing, checking interview recordings, and reviewing scripts with participants was employed as modus to eradicate bias; however, the potential for bias exists.

Implications for future research

Trauma-informed has become a buzz word across many modalities of public service industry. When it comes to teaching specifically, the implication of this research is far reaching when it comes to preservice teacher training, school district and building level professional development, building level-supports, and overall support of teacher autonomy.

For university teacher preparation programs, further research opportunities include what courses are being taught, in addition to the practical time spent in lab courses, to develop young educators as they support the increasingly diverse group of youth they encounter in today's classrooms. Hammond (2010) states:

It is impractical to expect to prepare teachers for schools as they should be if teachers are constrained to learn in settings that typify the problems of schools as they have been—where isolated teachers provide examples of idiosyncratic, usually atheoretical practice that rarely exhibits a diagnostic approach and infrequently offers access to carefully selected strategies designed to teach a wide range of learners well. (p. 42)

Curriculum and pedagogy are important, but as research suggests, traumatized students are not in a place of learning when their worlds are in disarray. Truly analyzing what is being taught regarding brain development, socio-emotional health, mental health diagnosis, and strategies to support these areas could be the catalyst for bringing about positive change in education. In

addition, research on dual degree programming, such as teaching and social work, might solidify a well-rounded education for preservice teachers. We often dual degree SPED and teaching, but is this enough? Fully analyzing what it takes to be an effective teacher in today's world can only increase the academic and socio-emotional health of our students.

Many schools provide teachers with on the job coaching. This involves setting smart goals, understanding students' needs when it comes to academic achievement, and providing strategy and pedagogy support. As Wolmer et al. (2016) discovered in their Israel research on resilience, training on precise tactics with permanent guidance, substantially enriches the role of teachers as the architects of emotional processes, which escalates teacher efficacy on learner engagement and classroom management. This study revealed that mentor teacher support was imperative to preservice teachers' successes. Therefore, opportunities for further research include providing preservice teachers with trauma-informed coaching. Currently, pockets of this coaching may be done through the newly created role of behavior interventionist, which has been created not only in MSD, but also in other districts. Behavior interventionist positions tend to be filled by those who have a special education license, so determining the background and effectiveness of this position is also of special interest consideration for further research. Conducting research on the implications of providing strategies and supports for preservice and in-service teachers through trauma-informed coaching, followed by analyzing the changes in classroom management and environment can only increase understanding of how to better support traumatized students.

An extension of the research stated above concerns the supports available to all educators within the school setting. This research revealed an absence in understanding the value of social workers in the school setting. Not only that, but preservice teachers never mentioned them as a

supportive resource. Exploring the effectiveness of supports in schools and how schools make educators aware of the resources available is of relevance. Additionally, the effect of collaborative partnerships and lesson planning between school social workers and preservice teachers might be of special interest to university teacher preparation programs and school districts alike. The opportunity of preservice teachers to collaboratively shadow and work with school social workers might increase their understanding of how to better support traumatized students in the classroom.

Finally, an abundance of work has been done on the effectiveness of educator professional learning communities (PLCs) as support for increasing academic success of students. This study confirmed preservice teachers felt as if there was not enough time for teachers to discuss specific student behaviors or histories during PLC time or during times slotted for professional development. In fact, student behaviors or concerns are often limited to Student Intervention Teams (SIT), which may not meet enough or include relevant staff. Furthermore, trauma-informed research supports student interventions from a strengths-based perspective. Based on Keyes' two-factor theory (Keyes, 2002; Keyes & Annas, 2009) of healing weaknesses and building strengths, building SIT teams can determine the areas of promise shown by students and develop accommodations to increase recovery and developmental necessities. Research on the value of allowing preservice and inservice teachers to utilize regular PLC time to collaborate and problem solve student histories and behaviors might better equip all teachers for effective classroom support of students.

Summary

The advice presented by preservice teachers suggests a lack in their training. There is a significant need to enhance preservice teacher practice in recognizing trauma symptomatology,

acknowledging the significant role that teachers can have in student-development, and cultivating strong student-teacher relationships in conjunction with traditional academic programming are important considerations for reform efforts in university preservice teacher training.

The preservice teachers in this study exemplified supporting students who have experienced trauma in the way one would expect from any educator. Knowledge concerning the effect of trauma on students' aptitude to learn, to control their reactions, to concentrate, to build relationships, and to evade problematic conduct is fundamental to preservice teachers' success in the classroom. Trauma-informed preparation provides educators the context that endorses empathy for adolescent learners rather than the inclination to blame them for their behaviors. When preservice teachers acquire cognizance on trauma's impact on students' aptitude to learn and cultivate relationships, they are better prepared with tactics to tackle these concerns. A strategic approach embraces secure and compassionate interactions. When preservice teachers expand their understanding of trauma-informed practice, their sense of empathy increases as they support adolescents in their classrooms.

The expansion of knowledge for preservice teachers calls for rehabilitation of university teacher preparation programs. Teacher preparation course work must become more complex, and preservice teachers must spend more clinical time in the classroom as active participants, with hands-on pedagogical training. This is imperative for supporting today's student population, who have diverse academic and socio-emotional needs. Preservice teachers must have opportunities to build their capacity for supporting all students in the classroom through collaboration, coaching, and intense support. Increased university presence should be embedded in school programming. University social work, counseling, and teacher education faculty can provide

expertise knowledge in supporting adolescent cognitive and socio-emotional development (Anderson et al., 2015). Providing these opportunities increases preservice teacher confidence and competence to be successful facilitators of learning and classroom management. School districts can provide momentum for this process by ensuring mentor teachers are equipped with the appropriate leadership and coaching prowess to guide young educators, as well as to facilitate student learning and supports in the classroom. Furthermore, teacher preparation programs have the fortuity to ensure preservice teachers have the requisite information to holistically support traumatized students.

Finally, preservice teachers reflected on their perceptions of preparedness as they attended to supporting not only traumatized students, but all students in the classroom. The results of this study revealed that increased preservice teacher aptitude in empathy, intervention, and awareness of trauma-informed strategies promotes their ability to manage classroom behaviors and increase academic achievement. With 40% of students identified as trauma-affected (Brunzell et al., 2015), teacher preparation programs must consider the ways in which they prepare preservice teachers for their educational careers, as they are the front-line administrators of healthy student growth and achievement.

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Appendix A: Kansas University IRB Notice of Approval



APPROVAL OF PROTOCOL

February 28, 2018

Anne-Marie Bixler-Funk
annemarie.bixlerfunk@ku.edu

Dear Anne-Marie Bixler-Funk:

On 2/28/2018, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Modification
Title of Study:	Teacher Preparedness in Working with Students Who Have Experienced Trauma or Who Have a Mental Health Diagnosis
Investigator:	Anne-Marie Bixler-Funk
IRB ID:	STUDY00140746
Funding:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• Dissertation Consent Form, • Dissertation Consent Changes, • HSCL-ambf, • Participant Recruitment Clean, • Dissertation Recruitment Changes, • Semi-Structured Interview Questions

The IRB approved the study on 2/28/2018.

1. Notify HRPP about any new investigators not named in original application. Note that new investigators must take the online tutorial at https://rgs.drupal.ku.edu/human_subjects_compliance_training.
2. Any injury to a subject because of the research procedure must be reported immediately.
3. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents for at least three years past completion of the research activity.

Continuing review is not required for this project, however you are required to report any significant changes to the protocol prior to altering the project.

Please note university data security and handling requirements for your project:
<https://documents.ku.edu/policies/IT/DataClassificationandHandlingProceduresGuide.htm>

You must use the final, watermarked version of the consent form, available under the "Documents" tab in eCompliance.

Sincerely,

Jocelyn Isley, MS, CIP
IRB Administrator, KU Lawrence Campus

Appendix B: Participant Solicitation

Subject Line: Supporting Students Exposed to Trauma

Dear Participant,

As you are aware, many students enter the classroom with significant trauma histories. Often, these trauma histories negatively impact the student's social, behavioral, or academic functioning. As a result, teachers play a critical role in supporting students with trauma.

Unfortunately, little is known about preservice teachers' prior training and experiences in supporting students with trauma. To better understand preservice teachers' experiences, I am conducting a dissertation study that will interview secondary preservice classroom teachers, who are completing their clinical practice in the MSD. As educators, your perceptions on supporting students who have experienced trauma, and the behaviors they exhibit in the classroom, are essential to this research. You are invited to participate in this study.

This study consists of your participating in a semi-structured interview, which will be conducted once during the spring of 2018. The semi-structured interview will aim to inquire about your experience working with students who have experienced trauma and your perceptions of feeling prepared to support said students. Interviews will be recorded via iPad application TranscribeMe!. After each interview, I will send the digital recording through the TranscribeMe! application for transcription. After I receive each transcription from TranscribeMe!, I will verify the transcriptions for accuracy. I will also transfer the transcription format from the table utilized by TranscribeMe! to a conversation format that encompasses line numbers.

Upon completion of analyzing the transcripts, I will follow-up with each participant, via in-person, phone, or video call, by providing a copy of the transcript and elucidating the information as an authentic representation of the semi-structured interview. In addition, time will be allotted for additional thoughts in response to the transcript or for clarification of information.

I hope to secure eight to ten participants for this study. To participate, please respond to this email, and I will contact you to schedule our first interview. Thank you in advance for participating in this study.

Sincerely,
Anne-Marie Bixler-Funk
Doctoral Student, Curriculum & Teaching
The University of Kansas

Appendix C: Consent Form

Project Title: Teacher Preparedness in Supporting Students Who Have Experienced Trauma

Researcher: Anne-Marie Bixler-Funk, Doctoral Student, Curriculum & Teaching, University of Kansas

Faculty Sponsor: Steven H. White, Ph.D.

You are being asked to take part in a research study conducted by Anne-Marie Bixler-Funk under the supervision of Dr. Steven H. White in the School of Education, Curriculum & Teaching Department at the University of Kansas. You are being asked to participate because you are a Secondary Preservice Teacher, completing your clinical practice in the MSD.

Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether to participate in the dissertation research study.

Purpose: The purpose of my dissertation study is to obtain information regarding preservice teachers' perceptions of (1) the needs of students experiencing child traumatic stress, (2) their role in supporting students experiencing child traumatic stress, and (3) their level of self-efficacy in supporting students experiencing child traumatic stress. To procure understanding into the perceptions of preservice teachers, this research will follow a qualitative study using narrative methods by analyzing semi-structured interview responses as narratives of their preparedness in educating traumatized students.

Risk and Benefits: There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. You will receive no direct benefits from participating in this study. However, your responses will contribute to the improvement of future studies and to researchers' understanding of teachers' perceptions of supporting students who have experienced trauma.

Compensation: Participating in this study is voluntary; there is no compensation for participating.

Confidentiality: Your confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by digital recording technology (TranscribeMe) used. It is possible, however, with internet communications, that through intent or accident someone other than the intended recipient may see your response.

In addition, interviews will involve digital recording. You have the option of not being recorded or of stopping the recording at any time during the interview process. All recorded interviews will be transcribed by TranscribeMe, and by the researcher (Anne-Marie Bixler-Funk). Only TranscribeMe, the researcher, and her faculty sponsor will have access to recordings. Once recordings are transcribed and checked for accuracy, and the research has concluded, recordings will be erased.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, the semi-structured interview will take approximately 45 minutes. Any follow-up interviews (anticipate at least one) should take no longer than 30 minutes, but this is at the discretion of the participant. If you do not want to participate in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. Your willingness to participate will have no effect on your current relationship with the researcher.

Contact and Questions: If you have questions about the dissertation study, please contact Anne-Marie Bixler-Funk (annemarie.bixlerfunk@ku.edu), or Dr. Steven H. White (s-white@ku.edu). If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact Human Research Protection Program, University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7568, or call (785)864-7429, or email irb@ku.edu.

Statement of Consent: By indicating ‘yes’ to the item below, you indicate you have read the information provided above, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this dissertation research study. If you would like a copy of this form for your records, please email Anne-Marie Bixler-Funk (annemarie.bixlerfunk@ku.edu).

Do you voluntarily agree to participate in this study by participating in an digital recorded, semi-structured interview and one follow-up interview via phone, in-person, or video conferencing? You are free to discontinue your participation at any time for any reason.

- ☐ Yes, I agree to participate. I understand that if I have any additional questions about my rights as a research participant, I may call (785) 864-7429, write the Human Research Protection Program, University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7568, or email irb@ku.edu.
 - ☐ I agree to digital recording of interviews. Please Initial: _____
- ☐ No, I decline to participate.

Thank you for taking the time to help with my dissertation research study.

Appendix D: Significant Statements, Formulated Meanings and Themes

	Nigel	Dash	Joy	Woody	Riley	Bruce	Eve
1. Provide a brief explanation of your classroom dynamics, content area, self-efficacy in your classroom, and demographics. Significant Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Particularly diverse Formalized needs--such as hard of hearing Informal needs--such as anxiety Differentiates curriculum for culture of students Instructs 90 students between four classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predominantly white, with a good percentage of minority. All seniors, some of whom are 19. I let them have their own personality and control the pace of the lessons. The biggest dynamic I look for in my classroom is comfortability. If they do not feel comfortable then they will not want to learn. That comes from respect for me and respect for each other. Just all around having an accepting environment. I have not had too many problems demographically (gender, sexuality, Promiscuity, or anything like that). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three freshman classes for MWH, one junior class for US History. Juniors are credit deficient. One class that is SPED and ESL, which occurs in the second part of the day, when they are less focused. Two classes have more choice and one class is completely structured. I have had to learn whether it is better to choose the battle with that class or get an administrator involved. Students pay attention to how things are handled from day-to-day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demographics are very affluent. Different personalities. I figured a mass group of people who have been together would show similar traits. International students are not anything what I was used to at [college]. Everybody is very excited especially in band. They love playing different instruments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predominantly white students. My classes are 19 or 20 students. My biggest class is my 6-plus, 28 kids but that is the advanced class. The second biggest [class] is 25 or 26 students. Third hour there are six resource kids and so the resource teacher is in here with me. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two of my classes are advanced classes. Three are geometry classes, which means they are freshman who are advanced and sophomores who are at level. Academically, I average to high students. There is not a ton of diversity. I have a handful of students on 504 plans. I have two students out of all 130 of them that are on IEPs, both for specific learning disabilities and both having specific accommodations. Behavior is not really a problem. I have not seen any fighting or bullying. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I teach AP English to juniors, AP English composition. Most of the students are great. They are very self-sufficient. Many of the students take multiple AP courses. Many of the students are gifted, so there is a challenge of balancing gifted versus students who have chosen the AP class. I only teach AP English for five sections a day so I am spoiled in terms of one prep which is nice. My class size is from 19 to 26; the average is 20 students a class.
Formulated meaning	Understands the differences in individual student needs.	Accepting students where they are and creating a welcoming environment is important.	Awareness of student needs and how to manage the classroom in a way that is fair and consistent.	Awareness of student population and self-reflection on how personal experiences shape beliefs.	Recognition of individual student needs as they relate to special education and academic progress.	Recognition of individual student needs as they relate to special education and academic progress.	Recognition of individual student needs as they relate to academic progress.
Theme	Differentiation	Classroom environment; Positive relationships	Addressing students' personal needs	Classroom environment; Trauma affected populations (bias)	Special education	Special education; Addressing students' personal needs	Special education

	Nigel	Dash	Joy	Woody	Riley	Bruce	Eve
2. How do you define trauma? Significant Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stresses or experience of some kind which produces an eventual need down the road. Requires differentiated instruction for the student. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I would define trauma as an event or an action that negatively impacts a person in the long run for the future. There are distinct cases of trauma: physical, vocal, abusive, drug, death. It is a wide range of anything that would negatively impact a student. Trauma I always correlate with bad. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trauma is the kind of thing that has such an impact that you cannot just leave it behind you. Whether it was physical or emotional, it is always there in the back of your mind or in your reactions. It is not something that you can just forget about and walk away from easily or people say get over it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anything that leaves a negative residual impact. It could be anything from a passing family member to a small car accident. Something that has a possibility to have a negative effect. Negative impact on daily life for any given amount of time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I would say something that is significantly impacting the student in more than one place of their life. Something that is affecting them, and they cannot just put it to the side. It gets overwhelming. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I guess maybe anything that impacts a student's typical life. Anything that adversely impacts their ability to live normally. A death in the family would impact their day-to-day life. It is going to obviously impact their performance in the classroom. Having an absent parent, a parent who maybe struggles with addiction is kind of also in a similar vein. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do I define trauma? That is a good question. Physical trauma is what my mind first goes to having been in a car accident. It happens when you have an accident, some sort of issue with their body afterwards, like healing maybe even being handicapped so a specific physical trauma. In terms of mental trauma, trauma occurring emotionally from a hardship in the past from losing a parent. It is something that could potentially cause hardship or sadness and things like that emotionally.
Formulated meaning	Preservice teachers recognize impact of trauma, and the multitude of ways it can be manifested.	Preservice teachers recognize the various causes of trauma and its impact on individual student needs.	Preservice teachers recognize the various causes of trauma and its impact on individual student needs.	Preservice teachers recognize the various causes of trauma and its impact on individual student needs.	Preservice teachers recognize the various causes of trauma and its impact on individual student needs.	Preservice teachers recognize the various causes of trauma and its impact on individual student needs.	Preservice teachers recognize the various causes of trauma and its impact on individual student needs.
Theme	Stress; Differentiation	Trauma behaviors	Trauma behaviors	Trauma behaviors	Trauma behaviors	Trauma behaviors	Trauma behaviors

	Nigel	Dash	Joy	Woody	Riley	Bruce	Eve
<p>2a. In what ways have your experiences defined your definition?</p> <p>Significant Statements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am very new at teaching. (Questioned whether he had personal trauma experience) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I personally have not gone through a lot of trauma. I grew up in an affluent area. I did not have to deal with a whole lot of that—really diversity. I have not experienced much of it myself. I mean my parents getting divorced and my cat getting run over are probably like my two biggest traumas in life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once I came here, I realized students had active cases going on for custody or foster care, and they are on their fourth foster home in high school and they are a sophomore. It has made me rethink my understanding I used to think trauma was a bad thing happened to a person. But the more I think about it, I feel like there could be passive traumas as well. A lot of home life stuff has entered my radar that I never had thought of before. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> February 11, my father passed. It was not trauma for me because I was good with my Dad. He was in a good place and it was quick. All these things kept it from being trauma. Physical trauma—I have had seven knee surgeries. I was pinned behind a tractor. At that time, it was not trauma for me because I was not smart enough to realize about what it was. The disposition of a person really influences how they react to it and some people are more apt to influence negativity than others but it just really depends on the person. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I do not know if I have any answer for that. I think as a student I did not realize that some of my peers may have been going through trauma. As a teacher, you see so many things students are dealing with and their peers probably have no idea. It may not be they are always being affected by it, but there are days when they are not worried about school right now and they have other things they are dealing with. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have not had any experience with those [injury/addiction] yet. When I was in high school or growing up, I knew classmates who lost parents. I had a student who was a foster child and had to go to another school because she moved into another house. Her last day was just very sad. She said I am not going to be here anymore. I was not prepared for that. It kind of hurt. Limited experience. I grew up in a rural school, so everybody knows everybody. You know who is struggling, so I immediately think of families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In terms of emotional trauma, I think something that has helped me a lot [was the death of] my dad a few years ago. He had a heart attack so it was very sudden and very unexpected. So, I like to think that I can use that experience to relate to students who have had death in the family or losing a parent and things like that. I feel like it shaped me to be a stronger person. Sometimes may be just (Sighs) take things a little easier I guess and not everything is a life or death situation in terms of a bad day in school or a bad time with a student and you realize that on the next day it will hopefully be better I guess. Yeah, it has made me a little more hard in the sense where things don't really bother me as much as they would have.
Formulated meaning	Preservice teachers may not always understand their students' experiences.	Preservice teachers may not always recognize experiences as traumatic or see their population as one that might experience trauma.	Preservice teachers recognize student experiences as they relate to trauma might manifest in ways they never expected.	The way in which one responds to trauma has much to do with one's disposition.	Preservice teachers recognize student experiences as they relate to trauma might manifest in ways they never expected. Academics may not be most important.	Preservice teachers experience secondary trauma because of their students' experiences. They are not prepared to respond to student needs.	The death of her father has allowed her to see students in a different light and better understand their traumas. She can put herself in their shoes.
Theme	Trauma-affected populations; Trauma behaviors	Trauma behaviors	Trauma behaviors	Resilience	Trauma behaviors	Secondary trauma; Appropriateness of intervention	Empathy; Resilience

3. How does your experience history have an impact on you when faced with this issue with your students? Significant Statements	Nigel <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Getting to know students, and not anything that's in their personal file, but getting to know students and how that informs our instruction . . . differentiating instruction based on that experience.● You must be sensitive these days, for example with the issue of gun violence, schools should not run live drills because of those who have been affected.	Dash <ul style="list-style-type: none">● For me, it mostly comes into hearing other people's traumas, examples of that and then trying to kind of put myself in their shoes and being able to see it through their eyes and what I would need, what would I want and to be open and accepting.● I think that a lot of students that do have a trauma in their life they don't know how to handle it and so us being able to handle it and help them handle it is crucial in their success, not just in school but in life.● Trauma goes so far beyond the classroom that . . . as much as we can do here it's always going to be better than in the long run just for their life.	Joy <ul style="list-style-type: none">● It's kind of made me more aware of the tone I take especially since I have fairly good rapport with most of my students.● But I just have to be sort of more aware of what I know might be going on with them.● After really thinking through the situation, it's like, "No, okay. They're recognizing their own issues and trying to deal with it in a productive way."● It's made me reconsider how seriously I need to take the stay in class, do your work, because there are kids that are definitely here not for the sake of doing work, but because they need somewhere to be that they feel supported.● It's kind of shifted my personal outlook less on, "Hey, let's get you that A," and more on, "Hey, let's make sure you get through the day and you feel safe and supported. And come back tomorrow and we'll tackle [curriculum]."	Woody <ul style="list-style-type: none">● I try to be the most empathetic person in the room in the situation because every student is going to feel an impact differently.● I try to be as openly supportive as possible. The floor is yours. Take as much time to think about what you want to say. I've got nowhere to be. If you need to say something, great. If it takes all night, great. As teachers, we live and die for students. I want some extra 30 minutes, an hour.● When dealing with students in dramatic situations, you don't want to make anything worse.● I . . . like kid gloves, you know, and just being as empathetic as possible and genuine. You have to be genuine because they can sense that instantly.	Riley <ul style="list-style-type: none">● I think it's hard in a sense that you want equality for your students, you want to treat every student not like fair in the sense they're getting the same thing but fair in the sense that they're getting what they need.● I think sometimes that's difficult because you know you want to have the same expectation for all your students but you know that math—I mean for some students, math may not be their top priority.● Their top priority is what they're going to eat for dinner tonight and if they're going to have dinner, and that kind of thing?● Just worrying about that makes it difficult sometimes because we want math to be at the forefront of their priority list when in reality, it's not.	Bruce <ul style="list-style-type: none">● I think with a lot of things with teaching, experience is so important, where when I don't have that experience or I haven't seen that situation, I don't know how to deal with it.● What I would have to draw on is I've talked with students who have lost a relative.● Although I haven't had a lot of direct conversations about those incidents, I've gotten opportunities to kind of see how students act, see how students carry themselves, and when it's appropriate for me to step in and say something or offer assistance in some way, depending on the situation.● Having that experience of those different situations, I think, is key, at least for me.● . . . but I think the way, as an instructor, you approach the situations, there's certainly some kind of common theme between them.	Eve <ul style="list-style-type: none">● I try and think what is going on in her life; like why would she act this way with me specifically and not with my co-teacher or things like that.● So, just maybe feel a little more understanding. I'm trying to understand how students act in the classroom and things like that.● I would try to take the more academic approach like try to dissect: why are you acting like this? I know it's not because of me probably because I just came in here in a few weeks ago.● Yeah, I feel like if I can get through that trauma of my dad passing away then the hardest day in this classroom is nothing nearly as what I experienced four years ago.● And having that better understanding at these people as human beings having emotions, having bad days.
Formulated meaning	Preservice teachers need to get to know their students on a personal level, and then provide instruction based on this knowledge.	Acceptance of personal situations is an important connection between preservice teachers' experiences and that of their students.	The development of personal relationships assists teachers in understanding students and their personal situations.	Approaching students authentically and with patience creates an environment of safety.	Consistent expectations may look different for students who may have had traumatic experiences.	Being prepared to support students can be difficult, but it is always important to observe behaviors and offer nonthreatening assistance.	Putting experiences into perspective and learning about individual students and their experiences better prepares preservice teachers for supporting students in the classroom.
Theme	Empathy; Differentiation; Positive student/teacher relationships	Empathy	Empathy; Cognitive, Social, Emotional Development	Empathy; Authenticity	Empathy	Empathy; Appropriate supports	Empathy; Appropriate supports

	Nigel	Dash	Joy	Woody	Riley	Bruce	Eve
4. When do you know you have a student in your classroom who has a trauma history?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">I know there are 504 plans and specific things tagged on student permanent files.Never seen any “tagging” for trauma.Hearing problems or family problems.I am informed by my empathy for student experience and desire to a) build relationships with students and b) towards that goal removing effective barriers.Trauma is an effective barrier and we’re removing that or minimizing that through differentiated instruction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">My cooperating teaching has told me of one or two.Outside sources are requisite knowledge from other teachers would be a good way to figure that out.Visually you can see a student’s body language as they come into the class.Day-by-day keeping track, you can notice subtle changes like that.Other than directly asking a student, but I don’t really think that would be very appropriate.Resources from—I mean of they’ve got an IEP or 504 plan something like that? Hopefully, there would be information in there also.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">I am kind of at an advantage here because pretty much the ones I have in my classrooms that have those experiences, it’s already been made aware to the staff and everything.Because I don’t have experience with it aside from just being told, I don’t really know what to look for as the warning signs in the problem aside from, all the stuff that we’re taught, if there’s bruises on, if they seem withdrawn, you know, the stereotypical.But there are kids that we have been told are going through these issues, right? And they don’t show those stereotypical signs most days.If I hadn’t been told, I probably wouldn’t have known.It’s kind of made me question like how well I think I know the trauma-based stuff because it’s not covered in undergrad very much.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">If someone is apart from the group. They kind of keep to themselves. They are very quiet. They hate eye contact.Somebody who’s like really shrunken and she’s kind of here and doesn’t want to bother anyone else. . . that makes me think that something happened in their history that caused them to be that way.If they’re flighty at all, if they’re looking quickly.I’ve also encountered people that are absolutely they just don’t care. They’re just bombastic and you know they live their life how they want to because they’ve had some crappy experiences.It just depends on...a lot of kids will have different reactions to different things and at different times in their life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">I think—I mean I know it’s reported.We’re aware for the most part that IEPs or like family situations should the parents let us know.I have a student who is just, he is not motivated. He doesn’t do any homework outside of class no matter what. He just doesn’t do anything and so I think just building that relationship and seeing what’s going on.I’ve had a student who has been acting up lately and I’m like: ‘Okay, you’re not normally doing this.’ So just like building that relation and saying is there something that we need to be aware of, like is there something going on that is—and that is why your school is slipping or are you just, you know, is it Spring or friends or something simpler?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">My cooperating teacher mentioned the student whose brother had committed suicide.Being told by administrators, the family themselves, or the student themselves.I mean the way the kid’s going to act in your classroom is going to be different.Being able to pick up on a student who’s relatively social or relatively talkative is more reserved and quiet and it’s becoming a pattern.As the educator or as somebody who sees this kid for an hour a day, every day of the week, you kind of start to pick up on things like that or start to pick up on when...you know they’re always just looking down or they’re not...in math,It’s easy for me track student[s] if they haven’t turned anything in in a week and a half or two weeks and they usually do or you know.For me, it’s recognizing those situations, but then that next step of knowing when it’s appropriate or what the appropriate next step is.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Without knowing specifically? Okay—I suppose what they present on the surface, like students who maybe kind of sit more with their shoulders hunched, looking down not making eye contact.Students who I can tell probably haven’t had their clothes washed for a few days or haven’t had a shower in a few days.Those physical cues are the first cues where I say “Hey, something is probably going on at home.”They are not totally standing out but you just kind of sense that something is going on based on their appearance.
Formulated meaning	Preservice teachers perceive the IEP will provide important trauma information.	Preservice teachers perceive the IEP will provide important trauma information.	Preservice teachers do not feel prepared in their understanding of trauma and potential identifying behaviors.	Preservice teachers are aware of social behaviors that may indicate disruption in students’ lives.	Preservice teachers are aware of social behaviors that may indicate disruption in students’ lives.	Preservice teachers are aware of social behaviors that may indicate disruption in students’ lives.	Preservice teachers are aware of social behaviors that may indicate disruption in students’ lives.
Theme	Empathy; IEPs	IEPs; Mentor teacher support	College coursework; School supports	Trauma behaviors	IEPs; Trauma behaviors	Trauma behaviors	Trauma behaviors

	Nigel	Dash	Joy	Woody	Riley	Bruce	Eve
5. What do you believe about student behaviors in those who have experienced trauma? Significant Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I'm sensitive to these experiences (but I am not going to pry). ● If administration informs me, then I will be sensitive; otherwise, with not being informed the students should tell you. ● I just try to be as sensitive as possible without being invasive. ● It's better to be cautious than to overstep something. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I would make sure not to single them out in front of the class, but I would probably approach them and ask them if everything was okay. Ask them if they wanted to talk to me about anything. ● Just try to work with them. ● There's nothing more that I want than to make them feel comfortable and wanted in the classroom. ● Try to get them to participate--normalize them a little bit more. ● I value their opinions and their thoughts and everything. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Those who have experienced trauma and their behaviors, I feel like it's very much extreme sides of the spectrum. ● You have kids that don't care and will do anything and they either want attention or they are very you know bombastic and they're living out there. ● Or they are reclude, you know? ● As the trauma heals or does not heal, there are varying degrees of such on either side, but I feel like those are the two extremes. ● I've seen more reclude individuals than I have bombastic, but I still think that's a thing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I think it's very different for every student especially. ● I know we have one student who has a very difficult home life and so she does crazy things to get other people's attention because that's how she makes friends. ● She's funny and she wants people to see her in that light and that's the way for her to put away [brush aside emotions] ● When she is talking to the teacher she doesn't really look at you and she kind of shies away. ● She doesn't like talking about things. ● I think it just depends on the student. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I haven't had a lot of opportunities where I've had a situation like that kind of presented to me where I don't necessarily know if tomorrow I have a student that is just checked out. 	
Formulated meaning	Preservice teachers may not feel comfortable addressing students' personal needs.	Being sensitive to student needs is an important part of classroom environment.		Trauma behaviors manifest themselves in different ways for different youth.	Trauma behaviors manifest themselves in different ways for different youth.	A lack of experience in working with youth may make it difficult to discern if anything is wrong.	
Theme	Empathy; Appropriate support	Awareness; empathy; Appropriate support.		Trauma behaviors	Trauma behaviors	Preparedness	

	Nigel	Dash	Joy	Woody	Riley	Bruce	Eve
<p>5a. Describe the behaviors you have witnessed and how they relate to student social, emotional, and cognitive development.</p> <p>Significant Statements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You could be sensitive to outward behaviors that are manifested without necessarily knowing what caused them. Internal triggers are harder to know, like a student who is shy. If trauma eased that, I wouldn't necessarily know what that was. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I had a student come in who was just kind of sad. She shut down. Developmentally, they aren't thinking about their environment. Socially, they aren't interacting as much as they would be so they are more introverted for that time and they are not going to really interact at all. Classroom-wise they distance themselves from the work and probably would not participate much. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have another student who—he's great one on one but when he goes home, he has recently—his mom was an alcoholic and she had been recovering here within the year or so. You know, it's still his mom despite everything that has happened. She was supposed to pick him up from school the day before spring break to take him on a trip and she never showed up. He came back and we had noticed a little bit different but nothing, you know, we just thought he had seen her That was affecting him just because even though he doesn't live with her he's still worried about it. So again, school is not his priority. I mean he has so many other things that he is worried about and I see that with a lot of kids. When you understand what is happening that you're like, I don't feel like I could do any different in their situation so you just hope they're doing the best that they can. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For example, one of my hours used to have a fairly difficult female student who isn't difficult in the sense of her behavior, just in the sense of her not showing much respect and talking with her friends. I have that clear sense that she does not respect me as a teacher in the classroom for whatever reason. He wasn't showering. I could tell that he had greasy hair and clothes he had worn the day before and things like that. He struggles with getting his work done and turning items in. He is constantly losing his work, so I make sure I have extra copies to give to him and things like that. After picking up all those cues I'm like: 'okay, I need to be a little more understanding here. He's not trying—Well, it's hard obviously.'
Formulated meaning	Being sensitive to student behaviors can be difficult, especially when educators do not know the cause of the behaviors.	When students disengage from the classroom, they may be sending signals that something is wrong.			When educators understand students' histories, they can better support them in the classroom.		Being aware of student behaviors and patterns better equips teachers with the knowledge to support students.
Theme	Triggers; Trauma behaviors	Cognitive, Social Emotional Development			Cognitive, Social Emotional Development; Trauma behaviors		Cognitive, Social Emotional Development; Trauma behaviors

6. Describe an experience you encountered with a student who has experienced trauma. Significant Statements	Nigel	Dash	Joy	Woody	Riley	Bruce	Eve
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I don't know that I've ever experienced what I'd call trauma. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A student had her dog die the other day and she was very, very sad. She took the phone call and she came back crying. She was trying to hide it. Her face was red and she put her head down. ● That's pretty much it, I haven't encountered much else in the few months I have been here. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There's a student whose entire family has kind of split. Conferences were very difficult for them because they came with their biological mother and their biological father, both of whom already had custody disputes over other children between them, and then the student's foster mother and the guardian ad litem because there was already a dispute between the mother and the foster mother. ● After a couple of days, what really kind of threw me took me off guard first was it went from, "Can I go to the counselor? I want to talk to somebody," to, "Can I come see you during power 50? I just want to talk." ● I was a little concerned because I'm a student teacher and I don't have history with these kids and I was asking my coordinating teacher like how much am I allowed to talk about with them? What do I do? He's just like, "Just be a human." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I haven't gotten close enough to any student for me to verify that they have encountered trauma. I can make assumptions. ● We've got one kid in high school who seems very skittish. She's not very outgoing. She's very quiet. She's very insecure. In the middle of band, she'll be playing with her hood up. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I have another student who is just very aggressive and I know his brother used to bully him. His brother has since been removed from the home which has been very difficult. He is not happy; he is not home anymore but he misses his brother, and so he is very aggressive which he of course has other issues as well so that's not the leading cause of it but that's something strong that is affecting him. ● I feel like that is the behavior that he knows is the aggressiveness and being disrespectful of his peers and so I see that with him being disrespectful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The best example I can think of would be the student this semester whose older brother I've never talked to her about it directly. I know my cooperating teacher has, because he had her as a student when it happened. ● I got to meet her parents during parent-teacher conferences, which was helpful. Then sharing their experiences and what to expect with their daughter. ● My cooperating teacher mentioned to me that every once in a while, she'll just come and like...she always has a pass and it's never a problem. The days she comes in late are the days where she's a little more checked out. ● From the conversations at the parent-teacher conferences, it sounded like she has a therapist. ● I hate to say you can just tell from looking at her face, but you can tell she's sad or something happened to make her think about it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Another example in terms of behavior, there's a young lady in one of my classes as well who—same situation. She wears oversized clothes. She wears dark clothes. Her hair is always in a ponytail like you can kind of tell it's unclear most of the time and she's one of the students who I would notice a smell as I walk passed. I can sense that she has that harder personality to her. ● Again, I don't know if it's just because I'm the new student teacher in the room or it's like a female-female thing going on. She doesn't really seem to listen to me. She always has her headphones in.
Formulated meaning	It is possible that educators are not aware of student trauma experiences.	Being aware of student experiences helps teachers make informed decisions.	Creating an environment of safety places educators in a position to support students, even when they feel inadequate in doing so.	It is possible that educators are not aware of student trauma experiences, even if they observe specific behaviors indicating its possibility.	Being aware of student experiences helps teachers make informed decisions.	Deciphering student's emotional health is an important strategy utilized by educators.	Awareness of students' habits is an important facet of understanding their histories or environments outside of school.
Theme	Trauma-affected populations; Trauma behaviors	Appropriateness of intervention	Student/Teacher relationship; Classroom environment;	Trauma behaviors	Positive student/teacher relationship	Cognitive, social and emotional learning	Cognitive, social and emotional learning

	Nigel	Dash	Joy	Woody	Riley	Bruce	Eve
6a. How do you believe you handled the encounter? Significant Statements		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I knew she wasn't going to be doing any more work that day. She got up, left quickly and I let her do her own thing. I didn't pester her at that point. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I did what I feel like I would have wanted somebody else to do in that situation where just sort of let them get it off their chest and empathized about general things. The feeling of having that level of trust with the student when I also was super uncomfortable at that conference, it made me feel a little bit better that they have enough people to turn to and everything. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I'm wondering why, but I don't want to pry because then it can cause so many issues-- public embarrassment etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was one day where he was just really acting up. I would give directions and he would just purposely not do it. I know it wasn't towards me. I think it was more tried to be funny, that kind of thing, but I was like: 'This isn't you.' And so, I was like: "Okay, that's a detention." Like, I will see you at 07:30, whatever, to serve your detention. Then he came in and got his detention slip and instantly started bawling. He didn't realize that it was a detention. He just thought he was coming in as normal. I was like: "No, with this behavior you are being disrespectful." I don't think he realized what he was doing. That's what I talked to him about. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That's a time where maybe I'm not asking her a question in front of the whole class, because the last thing she wants to deal with is okay, you know I feel crummy, I get to class, I don't know the answer, I don't want to be put on the spot. I never want to make a student feel uncomfortable in class. That would be an opportunity where maybe I check in, and it's never anything specific or never anything like oh, you came in late today, are you sad? I think it's appropriate to make myself available in a situation like that and show the student that hey, I'm here if you have any questions after this, we're good to go, but also just kind of checking in at that one-on-one level is more appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> So, I looked at her file in the system and I found that her mom wasn't around so I'm just kind of wondering if it's because she doesn't have a strong female role in her life she kind of takes that against me a little bit in a sense because she acts very differently with my co-teacher. So that's just on the surface with me thinking and trying to think it through the way—why she acts the way she acts with me specifically I guess.
Formulated meaning		Teaching emotional students can be difficult.	When educators put themselves in their students' shoes, they better understand student circumstances.	It can be uncomfortable addressing students' personal needs.	Having teachable moments with students assists teachers in setting expectations and showing care for students who are dysregulated.	Checking in with students is an important strategy for teachers as they try to better understand student needs.	Going the extra step to learn about students assists in understanding their emotional and social needs in the classroom.
Theme		Empathy; Emotional awareness	Empathy; Student/teacher relationship	Appropriateness of intervention;	Student/teacher relationship; Cognitive, social, and emotional development	Empathy; Cognitive, social, and emotional development	Student/teacher relationship; Cognitive, social, and emotional development

	Nigel	Dash	Joy	Woody	Riley	Bruce	Eve
6b. What coping skills did you employ in this encounter? Significant Statements		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The next day I saw she still looked kind of down and I told her, “Anything you need just let me know. I mean I’m not just math. Just if you want to talk about anything let me know because I have been through a lot so. I’m open, I’m here for you. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When they were giving specifics, I didn’t try and say, “Oh, I can’t even imagine how that must be,” or “If I was in your shoes, I’d do this,” because it’s not what she came to me for. But at the same time, it made me more concerned and then I reached out to the counselors about them. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I think just explaining what was happening and then just saying you know “I am going to have to talk to mom and dad about this. I know they’re worried about you and they want to know how you’re doing.” I think just explaining the bigger picture which is what I try and do with all the kids. I explained, “You were not doing it to be mean to me. I do not believe that.” It is not about 6th grade math. It is about your habits. It is like but you are learning, it is forming these habits and that is just what I try to talk to them about, you know, the bigger picture here. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I don’t 100% know how I’m going to approach that situation, because I want to approach it responsibly. I want to be supportive. I don’t want to ever force a student to experience something truly traumatic. I don’t have the training or the expertise and teachers aren’t expected to have necessarily that training or expertise. There’s other professionals for that exact situation. Knowing what’s appropriate, knowing kind of the responsible next steps, I would say I don’t have that experience yet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I just really try to be understanding again with her. She is a very smart young girl who also struggles with turning in homework. I don’t think she has a computer at home to work on homework so I let her go to the library for things or to work on things. I think over the past few weeks, our relationship has gotten better because I have—again just like figured it out this personality on my own a little bit, to give her a little more support to help her out.
Formulated meaning		It is important for educators to frequently check-in with youth who are experiencing stress.	It is important to listen to students when they come to teachers for support.		It is important to provide teachable moments to students and collaborate with parents.	Feeling unprepared to support students can feel uncomfortable, especially when one is not trained to do so.	Learning about student struggles and believing in their success can inform educators on appropriate interventions.
Theme		Appropriate supports; Cognitive, social, and emotional development	Appropriate supports; Cognitive, social, and emotional development School supports		Appropriate supports; Cognitive, social, and emotional development Parent support	Empathy; Appropriate supports	Empathy; Teacher/student relationships

	Nigel	Dash	Joy	Woody	Riley	Bruce	Eve
7. How do you know when a student's trauma experience has been triggered in the classroom? Significant Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If a student suffered some kind of abuse and there was a story we were reading that might have triggered something-I just don't know. But if I do know, I will have them read something else or read the story in a different way. ● It's not possible to know everything, right? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A lot of these students are going through really, really hard times. ● There's students who are starving and students who are homeless. That's something I cannot relate to. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● For most of them, I don't until they say something. ● I can watch out for what I know of. ● If I know that a student is going through something where they had abuse with their parents and that might come up in class, I touch on it more delicately or say, "Hey, if anything about this upsets you, you might want to do it separately. You can go to the conference room." ● So much of the information that we're giving is so vague that it's hard to know until something happens. ● It's really hard to be proactive without then digging in and saying, "Tell me your exact triggers. Tell me what I need to avoid," which I feel like is just going to set off some sort of reaction in the first place to make them think that I don't want to help. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I would just say an instant change in behavior. ● If you're getting eye contact-- especially up here on the podium-- you're always looking at the kids and you're always trying to get them to, either be more expressive or this or that or the other . . . There's always a connection. ● With every student, you're trying to make a connection and I was conducting a piece and a student who is normally happy, I could see in her eyes, she was defeated. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I haven't had that experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In my personal experience, I never had a student triggered in that sense in that social media sense. "Oh, I'm triggered. I'm mad right now. I'm emotional about those things." I haven't had that experience ● But for that girl who I just spoke about she typically does okay until I find that authoritative voice, and I sense a little bit of attitude. ● She also tends to work on other homework from other classes. I'm like "Please focus on English" and she's like "Fine..." and she'll put it away then stick it back out kind of thing. I guess that's the more subtle version of triggered that I've noticed.
Formulated meaning	Accommodating students' needs is an effective strategy for supporting students who may have been triggered in the classroom.	Some educators do not have experiences to assist them in understanding trauma.	Being aware of students' trauma histories helps teachers better prepare content for instruction. It can feel uncomfortable to know when to ask students if content is bothering them.	When educators are familiar with their students, they are better able to observe changes in behavior that may indicate a problem.		Some educators do not have experiences to assist them in understanding trauma.	Reflecting on interactions with students pushes teachers to think about classroom management in different ways.
Theme	Student/ teacher relationship; Trigger behaviors	Awareness of student needs	Differentiation; student teacher relationship; School supports	Student/teacher relationship;		Trauma behaviors	Bias; Trauma-informed strategies; Triggers

	Nigel	Dash	Joy	Woody	Riley	Bruce	Eve
7a. Explain your experiences with trigger behaviors. Significant Statements				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She had kind of pulled back into herself and was just barely playing. She was absent here. • She was thinking way too deep about other things. • She was not in the moment with the rest of us, which, depending on the situation, could be right, wrong, or indifferently. • I'm not a counselor so... 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I haven't had traditional experiences of triggered moments of emotional outburst and things like that.
Formulated meaning				When students disengage themselves from class, it makes it difficult for teachers to respond, especially if they feel unprepared to do so.			Some educators do not have experiences to assist them in understanding trauma.
Theme				Trigger behaviors			Trauma behaviors

8. Describe your training, or professional development, that explicitly relates to working with and understanding student trauma.	Nigel	Dash	Joy	Woody	Riley	Bruce	Eve
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I've done the usual classes on differentiated education, but I would say Trauma? Trauma described as such; that class was less about that trauma, more about language differentiation and physical disability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I don't think we covered it. Law inside the classroom and just trauma that could come from there and from a legal standpoint how to handle it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We talked about what happens when a student dies suddenly and how it affects other people and that is something that I experienced firsthand in high school. We've had training for like active shooter situations and how to come back to school from that a week down the line. We didn't have like a trauma team at my school. Training's inadequate. It's great that they focus on the specifics as a district of here's what's happening and then here's what's happening in your community. But the specifics don't really fill itself out to the broader picture for us. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training specifically was basically Abnormal Psych, which was required in the Ed Department. The class had a couple of different case studies. This is how they would react. What you do, what you classified as, etc. There was no real-world kind of thing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I don't think that if anyone could have said if this were to happen what would you do. I think we talk about situations in those classes that if this were to arise, what would you do, that kind of thing but I don't think there is anything. I don't know if I would have handled it the same way. Does that make sense? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have just had the two courses: multicultural education and one special education class. The special education class was a survey of a lot of different disabilities and things to look out for. Multicultural education above anything helped showcase thinking of the student more holistically or thinking of them and trying to think of their situation a little better. And I think that was helpful. We kind of throughout the class, kind of approached several different situations of race. We focused on gender and sexual orientation. There were a lot of things I had not thought about in the context of education, which was helpful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least since I have been in the district, we have not had much professional development about trauma and dealing with trauma in the classroom. So very limited to be honest, very limited.
Formulated meaning	Preservice teachers did not cover childhood trauma or trauma-informed strategies in their undergrad courses.	Trauma was covered from the viewpoint of what happens when students experience a traumatic event at school.	The specifics of being trauma-informed or of supporting students in the classroom were not covered in the same way as suicide or active shooter training.	Some teacher preparation courses expect students to take a psychology class where trauma was minimally discussed.	There is a lack of training on how to support students who may have experienced trauma, in real-world application.	Multicultural education assists preservice teachers in thinking about students more holistically.	Preservice teachers have not had childhood trauma or trauma-informed training at the district level.
Theme	Differentiation; Coursework	Coursework	Coursework; trauma-informed	Real-world connections; Coursework	Real-world connections;	IEPs/SPED; Real-world connections	Coursework

	Nigel	Dash	Joy	Woody	Riley	Bruce	Eve
<p>8a. In what ways did your teacher training program cover the topic of trauma?</p> <p>Significant Statements</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> But as for going over specific scenarios like, hey a student comes in, and their drunk dad beat them last night, we definitely did not cover. I feel like that would have been something that probably stuck out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the regular education classes, I feel like not very much was talked about in terms of trauma. Special education support in the exceptional child, which not everybody who has trauma is going to be in SPED services. So that really doesn't apply. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I guess in all fairness we did have human growth and development class and we kind of touched on it, but that was like maybe a couple of days, maybe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I think kind of just being aware. Like, in school when I was out in college, we would talk about different situations that could arise but it was never like: "This is what you do if..." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trauma we did not talk about specifically, aside from understanding that hey, every student is not coming to your class from the same background We saw some case studies but we were so removed from the situation, and I don't believe our classroom discussions ever got to the point where I really put myself in the situation directly. I guess specifically trauma? Maybe little scenarios of a case where we watched a video where a gentleman in the video got in like a car wreck and being like kind of paralyzed and going through what he was going through in school and not really having any supports. Like that's really the only level of trauma we really kind of talked about. We didn't really explore much more in-depth than that. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have taken one class about the exceptional child special education course where we touch base on emotional trauma and physical trauma things like that, that was probably two years ago.
Formulated meaning		There was minimal training on trauma-informed practices.	Special education classes provide information for students identified as SPED, but not trauma.	There was minimal training on trauma-informed practices.	There was minimal training on trauma-informed practices.	There was minimal training on trauma-informed practices.	Special education coursework provided a minimal amount of information on trauma.
Theme		College coursework	IEP, College coursework; Trauma –affected populations	College coursework	College coursework	College coursework	IEP; Trauma-affected populations

9. Discuss the supports that are available to you. Significant Statements	Nigel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration • Record keeping • Make-up work • Attendance 	Dash <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperating teacher • Resources of the school, administration, and the counselors. • I could ask some of my master teachers at KU. • My mom and dad have been in the district for 30 years of so, I could ask them. • My dad was a principal, so I could ask him. 	Joy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselors • Full-time school psych • SPED (which is almost all that is available) 	Woody <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School psychologist • I have a good amount of resources as people. • I have a couple of different friends attaining their psychology degree. It's just a guideline and just kind of ideal to understand what's going on. 	Riley <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probably a friend, honestly. So a friend who is student teaching also. 	Bruce <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would say direct coworkers, right? The ones I see every day; the ones I work and talk with directly. During lunch, when we are over in the math office, it gives us an opportunity to talk and that's how I heard of [the student] who came to school the day after he took his mom to the hospital. This is a learning opportunity for somebody like me, being new and going to be a first year teacher. • The other level, I would just say one level up with administration. As a student teacher, I haven't had a lot of contact with the administration. Not directly, and definitely not directly about students. 	Eve <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would just have to go to my co-teacher and ask him where my supports are because I would say I wouldn't know in the district.
Formulated meaning	All but Riley named at least one school support.						
Theme	School supports	School supports; mentor/preservice teacher relationship	School supports	School supports; advice	Individual support	School supports; mentor/preservice teacher relationship	School supports; mentor/preservice teacher relationship

	Nigel	Dash	Joy	Woody	Riley	Bruce	Eve
<p>9a. Identify who and what they are and the ways in which they have helped or hindered your work in the classroom.</p> <p>Significant Statements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absolutely helped me in the classroom. • I can concentrate on teaching. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We do get regular updates from counselors when there's something touchy going on specifically. • I know my kids go to the counselor when they need it or in the case of a couple, they go to their SPED teacher if they are already on an IEP. • I don't know what the steps taken are because the kids will usually just say, "I just want to go to a conference room," or, "Can I just go to the counselor?" • But if I had to do something, the best I could do would be to call whatever office pod I am closest to and be like can you find me a counselor? I do not know what's going on. <p>And that feels inadequate, when you are the adult in the room and something happens and you go, "I do not know what to do here, guys."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School psychologist; if you have any issues I know you can go to them and they can offer assistance or offer an opinion or some sort of plan. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We've had some professional development days because I think there's been a couple of students well...I think throughout the district, but in this school that have committed suicide relatively recently. The principal talked a lot about that and about her role in disclosing information, her role in offering supports. • I think as they have information that they can relay, they are probably a primary route that relays that information to the teachers. • So yeah, direct colleagues and the department and the administrators. 	
Formulated meaning	When preservice teachers are supported by mentors, they can focus on their teaching.		It can be difficult meeting needs of students, especially if there is a history of trauma.	Getting assistance from school supports is an effective coping mechanism when working with students who may have experienced trauma.		When school supports provide helpful information, educators feel supported.	
Theme	Mentor/preservice teacher relationship		School supports: Stress response, appropriateness of intervention	School supports		School supports; mentor/preservice teacher relationship	

10. In what ways do your mentor teachers support you in understanding student trauma?	Nigel	Dash	Joy	Woody	Riley	Bruce	Eve
<p>● He does a really good job about not prying, but learning about students and their background and possible family issues.</p> <p>● He is less specific with me . . . there are issues at home [with student] and he'll leave it at that.</p> <p>● He is very good at meeting/calling parents as necessary.</p> <p>● In terms of "trauma" specifically, I would not say that term ever came up as described as such.</p>	<p>● First and foremost, he has already had a lot of these students the semester before--years before, so he can tell me a lot more about their lives.</p> <p>● Communication was the biggest point that he would have had and just previous knowledge of the students.</p> <p>● We go through scenarios, kind of what he would do, what I would do and if there are any things that we could improve upon that. He is a good sounding board, and I for him (I think).</p>	<p>● Well, he has been a lot better, in comparison to the emails that we get from counseling, because he knows the kids a little bit longer. He's had an additional semester to get to know them and everything.</p> <p>● He's able to give more background information that I'm entitled to have but wasn't necessarily given. [He] puts it in that context as opposed to just words on a page, "Okay, I will try to remember that." But then actually explains things to me; that made a huge difference.</p> <p>● I would not have known how often he checks on this kid because he hides it so well.</p> <p>● He just never seems to get frustrated or annoyed with however many times I will say, "Okay, I am just double-checking. How should I address this so that it can get managed?" He can go, "Okay. Let's talk through it," instead of managing it for me.</p>	<p>● Just being able to empathize with them. Both my mentor teachers have talked about being very relaxed and being supportive.</p> <p>● Letting the student take it from there and not—of course, if they don't want to talk about, don't push it.</p> <p>● Allowing that student to feel like they're not a burden, like you want to truly help them, and that you will truly help them instead of just like well I put in my couple of hours for the day, how are you Johnny? Kind of thing. Actually caring for the kids.</p>	<p>● She has been good. She was upfront coming in [sharing] who are these kids and what have they been through. She had been very, very informative, so I kind of knew as I was getting to know the kids.</p> <p>● It was just kind of as we would talk about noticing things in the classroom we would talk about [student needs]. I was kind of seeing it, but also having that background story.</p> <p>● It helps because I feel more for the kid I think than just you know "Oh, they're acting up in class" but it's also forming that perception, [which] kind of changes a little bit too.</p>			<p>● Oh, it's probably a lot.</p> <p>● We both agreed that content is not an issue for me and things like that but, just in terms of classroom management there are—like I talked about just a couple of people in one specific classroom, that tend who you just have that power struggle with.</p> <p>● He has definitely given me, tips and resources like: "Hey, if you're having issues with those people just go talk to them" and get to know them better and feel that relationship. Try to figure out their strength and their weaknesses and play on those, their strength in class.</p> <p>● Just in terms of class management, my co-teacher gives me a lot of support because he has been in the classroom for 15 years and he's had all kinds of experiences He'll be in our room everyday too, observing.</p>
Formulated meaning	It is possible that some mentor teachers do not share all information needed to support students.	Reciprocal communication is an important characteristic of positive mentor/preservice teacher relationships.	When mentor teachers take the time to explain strategies and supports, preservice teachers feel as if they are learning and can be successful.	Being able to communicate with mentor teachers models appropriate behaviors for preservice teachers to apply in the classroom.	Reciprocal communication is an important characteristic of positive mentor/preservice teacher relationships.		When mentor teachers take the time to explain strategies and supports, preservice teachers feel as if they are learning and can be successful.
Theme	Mentor/preservice teacher relationship; Addressing student personal needs	Mentor/preservice teacher relationship; communication	Mentor/preservice teacher relationship; stress response; appropriateness of intervention	Empathy; mentor/preservice teacher relationship	Mentor/preservice teacher relationship; Trauma behaviors		Mentor/preservice teacher relationship; stress response; appropriateness of intervention

	Nigel	Dash	Joy	Woody	Riley	Bruce	Eve
10a. How have you applied this knowledge? Significant Statements		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being able to know the students is really the best way to get to the bottom of it from what I can tell. • Every case is so unique that you just can't have a book that tells you what to do. • We do a good job of making sure we cover all the bases of their [student] needs and recovery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel like he's helping me build skills that the district maybe so much didn't help me build for. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can be more focused on getting through my content each day and stuff, the things I may miss that he notices are helping me. I appreciate that for my student teaching and then I can look for those things moving forward.
Formulated meaning		Knowing students and developing positive relationships is the best way to support students.	The personal relationship of mentor teachers fills the gap of what was not mastered in college coursework.				Being able to accept feedback and apply new ways of doing things prepares young educators for their future.
Theme		Appropriateness of intervention; Positive relationships	Mentor/preservice teacher relationship				Appropriateness of intervention; Positive relationships

	Nigel	Dash	Joy	Woody	Riley	Bruce	Eve
11. What advice to you have for teacher preparation programs or district professional development regarding classroom support in teaching students who have experienced trauma? Significant Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The differentiated class I took should be incorporated. • Students who are labeled . . . professional development activities could be centered around this. • I think raising awareness of trauma. • Always increasing the empathy of teachers and the sensitivity of how we teach; it does not hurt anything to be more empathetic as a person. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not everyone can be as compassionate and open as they need to be. • I'd like to say that having a program that would make people more compassionate would be the best thing to do, but that's not going to happen, so just letting them know that it is an as important aspect of getting through trauma for these students. • None of this would have been learned inside in my college studies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel like we need to break away from the stereotypes of how to spot when kids are not being fed very well or not bathing very often. • I feel like for people in middle school and high school or secondary settings, it would help so much if we could look at it from, you know, how to notice that strain when they're trying to cover it. • Some others are sort of identifiable quantifiable triggers that we can notice in kids who are trying to just like suck it up and move past. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching us a few calming triggers • DSM-5 and going over that seemed to at least me prepare decently for the situations that I would come across at any given classroom and how to handle them was alright, but not starting the conversation. • Maybe starting the conversation, what to say, how to say it, and I don't know, maybe where the line is. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I kind of think more real-life examples. I think having real teachers come or maybe having them submit things that are you know without the names and stuff but saying this student is doing this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • But finding more ways to maybe make case studies real. I think case studies are great, they're a great way to kind of read about a situation, discuss through the situation, maybe how you would approach a given situation, but really before you have that in-class experience, it's hard. • So that's why I think there's a lot of value in like professional development in like a setting like a school. I think there should be those opportunities where you have an opportunity to maybe reflect over things that have happened or share experiences, share conversations you've had with students. • I'm kind of in this position where I just want to hear people's experiences and people's stories, because like I mentioned earlier, experience is so important. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would be beneficial for me at least is having a specific day for student teachers to go to a office district office and have people just talk and ask what is this support through this district? Where or who can you go to for this—? • It would be nice to have that introductory session to the different supports that the school offers to the teachers and then how you can get that support as a student teacher as well. • I wish I would have had more days in the actual classroom. You know, working with the teacher super early on developing plans and practicing classroom management things like that because my first few experiences in my classroom through my program I was just sitting in the desk.
Formulated meaning	Taking time to teach empathy and practice it would make teachers better in the classroom.	Taking time to teach empathy and practice it would make teachers better in the classroom.	Better understanding the ways trauma manifests in youth would assist preservice teachers in knowing how to support students.	Learning more about the diagnosis and ways to respond to student's individual needs as it relates to trauma.	Finding ways to make learned content from college courses applicable in the classroom would better prepare preservice teachers.	Finding ways to make learned content from college courses applicable in the classroom would better prepare preservice teachers.	Preservice teachers need to hear from district officials about the supports available to them in their buildings.
Theme	Trauma-affected populations; IEPs; differentiation	Real-world application; Appropriateness of intervention; empathy	Trauma-affected populations; stress response; trigger behaviors	Trigger behaviors; Appropriate interventions	Appropriate interventions	Appropriate interventions	District and school supports; Real-world experience